

# THE TABLE-TALK OF A MESOPOTAMIAN JUDGE

## PART II.

(The publication in "*Islamic Culture*" of Professor Margoliouth's translation of the "missing" eighth volume of Tanukhi's "*Table-Talk*", discovered by Dr. Krenkow in an unnamed MS. in the British Museum library has led to the discovery of another of the missing volumes, of which Prof. Margoliouth has made the translation which we now have the pleasure of publishing. The volume was brought to the notice of Professor Margoliouth by the late Taimur Pasha of Cairo just before the latter's death. Ed.—"I. C.")

## PREFACE

IN the preceding part of these narratives I have explained my reason for collecting them. I have clearly stated my intention therein, and have repeated this in the Preface to each part with some change in the expression, either openly or by hint. I have informed the reader or the student that they are of a sort which no-one has anticipated me in writing. For in the main they are confined to matters suited for mutual communication, inasmuch as they comprise various records of events which have happened within our time, which in my opinion it would be unjust to refrain from committing to writing; and I have undertaken to mingle these with different sorts of noteworthy proceedings and anecdotes, curious coincidences and dreams, strange spells and experiments, and the acts of various classes of men, artisans and craftsmen, kings and chieftains,—\*men of the lowest and men of the middle rank; further, specimens of extraordinary behaviour. I have further undertaken the task of varying these with modern verses and recent *orations by persons* contemporary or nearly contemporary with myself, famous for their skill and felicity. I have further stated my reason for arranging them in no order, and the advantage to be derived from their being mixed up in this way. I have also called attention to the valuable lessons which they contain, and offered to any one whom they may not attract the plea that in any case they are better than blank pages. I have also observed that they are suited to persons who have finished most of their studies, and wish to read a

---

\* Owing to a rent in the paper the beginnings of several lines are lost,

book which will instruct them in the character, practice, ways and customs of different ages; and to compare the present with the past state of affairs, so that they may know how dead the world is, how changed are men's ideas and aspirations, how virtue has ceased to exist, while trials and losses have multiplied; the disappearance of the worthy and beneficent, the ruin of the upright and well-mannered, the baseness of men's aims, the extinction of charity, the loss of decorum and refinement, in the character of the mass of mankind. I may say with truth that if some sage of the former ages could come to life and see the state to which we are reduced, he would not doubt that the world's end had arrived, or that men had been changed into wild beasts or useless instruments; inferring this from the disappearance of gentlefolk, the severity of the distress, the cessation of industry, the series of disasters, and the introduction of evil practices, and vile, shameful, customs. Let us pray God Almighty for speedy deliverance and for general relief to the world. He hears and answers, is loving and merciful, sits on the throne of majesty, achieves what He will. He is sufficient for us, and a good patron and helper is He.

1. I was informed by Abu'l-'Abbas Muhammad b. Nasr the Witness that Abu 'Abdallah Ja'far b. al-Qasim al-Karkhî\* wrote to Abu Ja'far b. Ma'dan, bidding him select an agent who should look after his estate in Ahwaz. He selected 'Amr b. Muhammad al-Ashja'i, who was a personal friend. He managed the estate for some years, after which al-Karkhî was made governor of Ahwaz. Arriving there he demanded al-Ashja'i's accounts. These were produced, and scrutinized by al-Karkhî's clerks who found therein a deficit of six thousand dinars. By al-Karkhî's order al-Ashja'i was kept in custody in the vestibule of his house, and payment demanded of him. Al-Ashja'i wrote an account of the matter to Ibn Ma'dan (the friend who had appointed him). It was al Karkhî's custom to invite Ibn Ma'dan to a meal with him every day. The invitation was sent on this day, but Ibn Ma'dan kept away, sending a message to the effect that you cannot invite a man to share your meal, whose chosen and trusted friend you suspect in consequence of some clerks' fabrications, and put in custody. Al-Karkhî thereupon put off his meal, and sent al-Ashja'i (the suspected agent) to Ibn Ma'dan with a clerk and the accounts, and the follow-

\* Finance minister of Fars, 310 A.H. See Index to the *Eclipse of the 'Abbasid Caliphate*.

ing message : I certainly should not allow any false charge to be maintained against your friend, and that which I have brought is something ascertained. Still, it is possible that he may have lost the money or never received it, and I am sure no-one trusted and chosen by you would embezzle. He has not been put in custody ; I have only desired him to sit here while I waited for you to come and arrange matters for him. Still, if this displeases you, I put my property, this man, and his accounts, in your hands. You may make him refund me the whole amount or part of it, or abandon the whole claim. Only make no more delay, since I will not eat till you come.—Ibn Ma'dan sent al-Ashja'i home, and himself rode to al-Karkhî. Neither of them made any further reference to al-Ashja'i who pocketed the dinars, and thus the affair ended.<sup>1</sup>

2. I was told the following by the qadi Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ahmad b. Marwan.<sup>2</sup> He had been told it by his maternal uncle Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Harun. One of my friends told me, he said, as follows : On a certain night I had been reading Galen's treatise on anatomy. I fell asleep and beheld a mysterious person calling me and reciting (Surah, xviii. 49). *I made them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth nor the creation of yourselves, neither did I adopt the seducers as help.* I woke up and tore up the book.

3. The same qadi Abu Bakr also told me that he had heard the following from Mukram b. Bakr. I was, he said, in the court of the qadi Abu Hazim, when an old man came forward accompanied by a young lad, from whom the former claimed a thousand dinars of gold which had been lent him. Asked what he had to say, the lad admitted the debt. The old man was asked what he wanted. He said : His imprisonment. The judge then said to the lad : You have heard, so what say you to paying part down and soliciting delay for the remainder ?—He said : No.—The old man then said : If the qadi thinks proper to imprison him, let him do so.—Abu Hazim studied their features for a time, and then bade them remain together till another session when he would decide their case.

Since Abu Hazim and I were on intimate terms, I said to him : Why has the qadi deferred the lad's imprisonment ?—My friend, he said, in ordinary cases I can tell from the faces of the litigants which of the two is in the right, and

(1) The date of this anecdote must be 310 A.H., since in that year this Ja'far b. al-Qasim al-Karkhî was made finance-minister of Fars. The story is doubtless intended to illustrate the generosity of the times.

(2) Probably the qadi who died 367 A.H. See Index to the *Eclipse*.

have acquired skill thereat, which rarely fails. Now it has occurred to me that this lad's readiness to acknowledge the debt has some ulterior motive, which is not quite honest. No violation of justice will result from their being bound over, whereas something about them may come to my knowledge which will enable me to decide the case with confidence. Did you not observe how little ill-feeling they displayed in the discussion, their lack of disagreement, and their calmness, in spite of the magnitude of the sum? Young men are not usually so conscientious as to acknowledge so readily their indebtedness to such an amount.—Whilst we were talking thus, admission to interview Abu Hazim was demanded for one of the leading and richest traders of Karkh.\* Permission having been granted, the man entered, saluted the qadi, and in choice language explained his reasons for desiring the interview. He then proceeded: I am afflicted with a young son, who wastes my substance over singing girls. The trouble is due to a procurer named (he mentioned the name). If I refuse him my money, he devises expedients which compel me to pay for him. If I dissuade him from these courses, and go through my resources with him, he becomes insolent. And indeed he has to-day confessed that he has suborned the procurer to demand a thousand gold dinars of him to-day, as a debt that has fallen due; and I have been informed that the procurer has appeared before the qadi to make the demand, and get him imprisoned, which will occasion unpleasantness between me and the lad's mother until I pay the sum on his account to the procurer, who, when he gets it, will set it off against the courtesans' fees. Hearing this, I hurried to the qadi to explain the matter to him, hoping that he would remedy it in a way which will win for him the divine gratitude. When I arrived, I found the two, the lad and the procurer, at the gate.—When Abu Hazim heard this, he smiled, and said to me: What is your opinion?—I said: This and the like is through God's favour to the qadi. And I began to invoke blessings on him.—He ordered the lad and the old man to be brought. When they entered, Abu Hazim threatened the old man and exhorted the lad, and the former confessed that the facts were as had reached the qadi, and that he had no claim on the lad. The merchant took his son by the hand, and the two went away.

The qadi said to me: This Mukram was a man of excellent character and great gallantry. I observed that

---

\* See Le Strange's *Baghdad*.



someone addressed him as Abu Jady (goat's father). I asked him what was the purport of this appellation. Do you not know, he said, that the goat's father is the buck ?

4. Abu 'Ali' Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. al-Mutahhar al-Hatimi<sup>1</sup> recited to me the following ode addressed by him to Saif al-daulah :

Far distant is patience when parting comes near,  
And lover's distress is revealed by the tear.  
I stood by the ruin where dwelt my delight,  
Now absent, my frame imitating its plight.  
My sighs like its breezes, my tears like its rain,  
My limbs like the ruins of home that remain.

He proceeds

The souls of the foemen for keeping the hands  
To sword which will surely perform his commands.  
All blunt to my touch, though its sharpness descends  
With death upon foes and with wealth upon friends.  
As fire which gives guidance to wanderer will  
Consume what resists it, while warming the chill.  
Thy blades become cups, circulating men's gore :  
Their clashing the music, their cupbearer war.  
The treasury truly by thee is stripped bare :  
But glory's resplendent with gems rich and rare.

5. The qadi of Baghdad Ahmad b. 'Abdullah called al-Buhturi<sup>2</sup> recited to me the following verses of Abu'l-'Ala Sâ'id b. Thabit,<sup>3</sup> which had been recited to him by the author :

Two hopes distress me with the fear  
Lest I accomplish neither here :  
As gift the whole world to bestow,  
And save mankind from death, their foe.

Afterwards I met this Abu'l-'Ala Sa'id at Wasit in Jumada I, 365 (began Jan. 6, 976), and asked him about these lines. He said : Your informant was mistaken ; I never told him that they were by me.—I asked him whose they were.—He replied : One Abu'l-Hasan son of Abu Dawud, clerk of the *Waqf* in Basrah, informed me, with a chain of authorities which I have forgotten, that a certain Indian monarch went to war with another and was killed in battle. He was found lying among the slain, while he still had some life in him, by one of his followers,

(1) A voluminous author, who died 388 A.H. He is best known by his attack on the poet Mutanabbi, of which he has given an amusing description, reproduced by Yaqut in his *Dictionary of Learned Men*, vol. vi., end.

(2) The name is more likely to have been al-Bakhtari.

(3) For his career see Index to the *Eclipse of the 'Abbasid Caliphate*.

who dismounted and asked him whether he had any wish. The dying monarch recited a poem of his own which became popular and was handed down ;<sup>1</sup> these verses formed part of it.

6. I was told the following by Abu'l-Qasim al-Husain b. Muhammad b. Nabil, a middle-aged man whose father had been a soldier in Baghdad and had gone to live in Ahwaz, where he acted as clerk to 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Khurasani, chamberlain to Mu'izz al-daulah. He was a scholar, attended lectures on the works of the learned, and belonged to the Imami sect.<sup>2</sup> I saw, he said, in the Asylum at Basrah a professional clerk, who was under restraint. He was a poet, and recited to me the following verses by himself.

By patience and ruses my troubles I baulk,  
And keep my mind free from reflecting by talk.  
I hope for the morrow, but when it appears,  
My patience turns traitor with increase of fears.  
Anxiety quits not, nor terminates woe :  
Joy makes no appearance, tears cease not to flow.  
To God I complain of the pains I endure :  
He knows that myself I can compass no cure.

He also recited to me the following verses by himself :

What crime could brand with greater shame.  
Than treachery to friendship's claim ?  
Affection claims that friends condone  
Each one the faults of every one.  
Of fortune's evil eye the hurt  
By disregarding we avert.

Also the following :

Where are your tears, my eyes ? Perchance  
Fate has bewitched you with some glance.  
It saddens me to shed no tear,  
As before parting did its fear.

7. A poet named Abu'l-Khair Salih b. Nabil attached himself to my father at Ahwaz. One day, when I was present, he came to my father and presented him with a small sheet of paper. When my father read it, he smiled, and immediately ordered some dirhams to be given to the poet, who went away. I took the paper and found that it contained a salutation with the following verses :

O thou whose gift of charity  
Makes slaves and bondmen of the free,

(1) Possibly the word in the text should be rendered : - " was translated ".

(2) Believers in the right of 'Ali's descendants to the Caliphate.

By whom all others are outdone  
 In bounty, prize-winner alone,  
 Duties undue thou dost discharge  
 And doubly all my claims enlarge.

One day there came to him a poet called the man of Hama-dhan, of whose name and family I am ignorant, and handed him a paper containing the couplet

The qadi's choice is mine, let that suffice ;  
 I find no fault with mine, nor with his choice.

My father immediately ordered a handsome gratuity to be given him.

8. Several of the people of Shiraz have recited to me the following lines by the prince 'Adud al-daulah Abu Shuja' son of Rukn al-daulah Abu 'Ali<sup>1</sup> :

Vain professor of word-painting,  
 Here's a mess thy skill attainting !  
 Buttered rice in crystal brimming  
 Looks like pearls in camphor swimming.<sup>2</sup>

Also the following :

A brilliant cloth of topaz I espied,  
 Its ends projecting, flagons to provide ;  
 Flagons of crystal, full or void, are seen,  
 And wounded forms which hide behind a screen.  
 The busy pages send the cups around,  
 And leave the drinkers' minds, once sane, unsound.<sup>3</sup>

Also the following :

Between us we a cask did slay  
 While night was turning into day.  
 Its two veins squealing at the stroke  
 Were like two ravens when they croak.<sup>4</sup>

I was told by Abu'l- Ala Sa'id b. Thabit that the qadi Abu'l-Qasim 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Tanukhi<sup>5</sup> wrote the following reply to a letter which had been addressed to him by the former :

Your letter has arrived :

And when the envoy brought it, I felt sure  
 Departed youth had come to me once more.

(1) Biographies of both these princes will be found in the *Eclipse of the 'Abbasid Caliphate*.

(2) In the *Yatimat al-dahr* it is recorded that these lines were addressed to a man who had produced a poetical quotation in description of all the dishes which had previously been brought to the table, but had nothing ready for this.

(3) The translation of these verses, which are probably corrupt, is tentative.

(4) Apparently the vessel had two spouts or orifices, and the noise made by the liquor as it issued is compared to the croaking of ravens.

(5) Father of the author.

9. I was told the following by Abu Ya'la Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Baridi, clerk.<sup>1</sup> When, he said, I went to Saif al-daulah, he treated me with respect and kindness and as a friend. I used to present myself in the evening with other guests. On one of these occasions he said to me: The murder of your father was a most fortunate affair for me.<sup>2</sup>—I asked him how that could be, invoking a blessing on him.—He said: When we came away from Baghdad<sup>3</sup> my brother Nasir al-daulah restricted me to the government of Nisibin,<sup>4</sup> where I remained, though its revenue was not sufficient for my needs. Still I put off the evil day, and endured the stress, much as I disliked it, for a time. Then I learned that Syria had been evacuated except by Yanis al-Munisi, while Ibn Tughj remained at a distance in Egypt, being content that Yanis should be his deputy there, and transmit a small tribute to him.<sup>5</sup> So I bethought me of mustering a force, invading and seizing the country, expelling Yanis, and resisting Ibn Tughj to the best of my ability, should he march against me. Should I succeed, well and good; should I fail, I should at least have procured enough ready cash out of the country to relieve my distress for a time.

I found that it was impossible to collect an army without money, and I had none. So I thought I would pay a visit to my brother and ask him to assist me with a thousand of his own soldiers, whose expenses he would defray, while I led them. I wanted him also to give me some money. I should then undertake the expedition, and any territory which I acquired would be an addition to his realm and his power. Now I was suffering from quartan fever, and started for Mausil in this plight.

(1) The Baridi family played important parts in the first third of the fourth Islamic century. See the Index to *The Eclipse of the 'Abbasid Caliphate*. This son of Abu Yusuf al-Baridi is not mentioned in that collection. The story here recorded is of great interest as throwing light on the career of Saif al-daulah, one of the most remarkable figures of the fourth century.

(2) See *Eclipse* V. 51 foll. He was murdered in the year 332 A.H. by his brother Abu 'Abdallah, the ablest and most unscrupulous of the three brothers, for refusing to lend a sum which the latter had demanded.

(3) See *Eclipse* V. 28-45. Nasir al-daulah was supreme in Baghdad after a victory won by Saif al-daulah in 330 A.H. but was compelled to retire in 331.

(4) The ancient Nisibis.

(5) Ibn Tughj, better known as al-Ikhshid, had become ruler of Syria in 330. Yanis, freedman of Mu'nis (probably Muqtadir's general), is mentioned in Ibn Sa'id's Chronicle as one of those who seized the country, with whom Ibn Tughj made terms.

Calling on my brother, I saluted him. He asked me what had brought me. I replied that it was a matter which I would presently explain. He welcomed me, and we parted. I then sent him a message in which I explained my scheme to him.—He displayed extreme repugnance and vehement rejection of the plan. I then addressed him orally, and his rejection was even more pronounced. I proceeded to repeat my request through all the persons who could venture to address him on such a subject, and he refused them all. He was indeed stubborn; if he refused a request the first time it was made, he would persist in his refusal. I could now think of no-one whom I could employ as intermediary, and to whose pleading he might yield, except his Kurdish wife, the mother of his son Abu Taghlib.<sup>1</sup> I called on her and put the case before her, begging her to ask him. She said: You know his character. He has refused you. Were I to ask him after so short an interval, he would refuse me too, and I should lose my influence with him, without having gained the point. So wait a few days till I find him in a complacent mood, or something occurs which I can turn into an occasion for talking to him, commending your scheme, and asking him to back it.—Perceiving that she was right, I waited. Then one day when I was seated in his presence, there suddenly entered a dove-cote-keeper, bringing a missive carried by a pigeon, which, the man said, had flown from Baghdad. When Nasir al-daulah read it, his face darkened, and he exclaimed: *We are God's and to God do we return!* Displaying sorrow and consternation, he said: My friends, the arrogant fool, the ignoramus, the squanderer, the brainless bungler, without means, without troops, has put to death the man of prudence and moderation, of wisdom and good counsel, the careful administrator, the master of wealth and of hosts! Truly this is a marvel.—Sir, I said, what news have you received?—He tossed the paper to me, bidding me read.—It proved to be a message from his representative in Baghdad, dated two days before, wherein he stated that in the hour of writing it had been ascertained from a variety of sources that Abu 'Abdallah al-Baridi had put his brother Abu Yusuf to death, and made himself master of Basrah.<sup>2</sup>

When I read this (Saif al-daulah proceeded), having heard his exclamations, I nearly died of anxiety and fright; I was convinced that he would suppose me to embody the

(1) This person's career can be learned from the Index to the *Eclipse*.

(2) This last detail does not appear in the narrative of the *Eclipse*.

qualities which he had attributed to Abu 'Abdallah, and to fancy himself in the rôle of Abu Yusuf ; for indeed I had come to him to ask for troops and money.<sup>1</sup> I was convinced that the parallel would suggest to him to issue an order for my arrest and imprisonment. So I began to humour and mollify him by abusing Abu 'Abdallah al-Baridi, condemning his action, and denouncing his folly in the strongest terms, till the conversation ended. I then let it appear that the fever from which I was suffering was about to attack me, and that it was the time for a paroxysm. Accordingly I rose, and he bade the slaves go in front of me. Mounting my horse, I made for my camp, for since my arrival I had encamped outside the city, and had not lodged in a house. When I entered my camp, which was by the Upper Monastery,<sup>2</sup> I did not dismount, but bade my retainers start off at once, without sound of trumpet, and follow me. I hurried on by myself, and was presently overtaken by some of my followers. I galloped headlong, fearing lest Nasir al-daulah should be too quick for me and do me some mischief. Before I noticed it, I had reached Balad<sup>3</sup> with only a few of my troops, being followed by the rest. When these had come up, I started at once, and gave them no respite. When we had got to a distance of a parasang from Balad, we perceived a host with banners overtaking us. I was convinced that this was a party sent by my brother to arrest me, and I bade my men get ready for a fight, only not to commence, but to hurry forward. Suddenly I perceived a Bedouin galloping by himself, who, when he had come up with me said : Prince, why this haste ? Your servant Danha is arriving with a message from Prince Nasir al-daulah, and begs you to wait till he comes up with you.—When he mentioned Danha, I said to myself : If mischief were intended, Danha would not be the messenger. So I dismounted, and being worn out with the ride and attacked by the fever I flung myself on the ground. When Danha had come up, he remonstrated with me for the rapidity of my departure, and I told him the truth about the notion which I had conceived. He said : I assure you that the converse of your notion has come to pass, that what has happened has made him respect you, and he has sent me to you with the following message : You came to solicit

(1) As Abu 'Abdallah had done.

(2) An enthusiastic account of this Monastery, which was on an eminence overlooking the Tigris, is given by Yaqut.

(3) According to Yaqut at a distance of 7 parasangs from Mausil and 23 from Nisibin. It is described by Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, ii. 838.

a certain favour of me, and found me in a surly mood, so I refused you. Afterwards I felt that you were in the right, and was expecting that you would repeat your request, in which case I should have accepted your proposal. On the contrary you went away without repeating it or even bidding me farewell. But now, if you will, stop in Sinjar or Nisibin, and I will despatch to you both the men and the money that you requested, so that you may invade Syria. I bade Danha offer him my warmest thanks, and communicate certain matters which I told him. Further, I said, tell him that I went away without taking leave, owing to news of a Bedouin raid on my province, and rode off to overtake the raiders ; I did not repeat my request in order to save him annoyance. If, however, he has adopted this notion, then he is to regard me as his son, and if I win anything, it will be his. So I will wait in Nisibin for the fulfilment of his promise.—So I proceeded on my way, and Danha went back. After a few days Danha arrived with a thousand men, equipped and provided with pay and expenses, and a proper supply of horses and mules, bringing besides fifty thousand dinars. He said : Here are the men, and here is the money. Ask God's blessing and start.—So I went against Halab and took it, and there followed my famous campaigns against the followers of the Ikhshid, which continued till at the last they left me in possession of these provinces, and I left them in possession of Damascus. Thus I became independent of Nasir al-daulah, and the cause of all this was the murder of your father by your uncle.<sup>1</sup>

10. Abu 'Ali al-Hatimi<sup>2</sup> recited to me a passage from an Epistle which he addressed to an eminent man, describing him :

His thoughts are plans, his menace punishment ;  
 His promise safe ; sure his encouragement.  
 His words wise adages, his home a fane ;  
 His glances boons ; his gifts profuse like rain.  
 Gladly would men his excellences count ;  
 They find their words fall short of the amount.  
 But should they try his marvels to conceal,  
 God and men's honour would the same reveal.  
 And some would be forsooth his rivals ; they,  
 Whose earnest is inferior to his play.  
 Yet how could deed be matched or height attained  
 Which reason cannot grasp nor fancy strained ?

(1) In a story told in the First Volume of this work Nasir al-daulah is advised by his father always to favour his own relatives, and remembers that advice in trying circumstances. It is probable that the tragedy of the Baridi family brought it again to his recollection.

(2) See above, No. 4.

11. I was told the following by a man of Ahwaz. I saw, he said, the Syrian poet, Abu'l-Hasan al-Minbari al-Ta'i, at the gate of al-Husain b. 'Ali al-Munajjim, who was at that time governor of Ahwaz, whither for a time he repeatedly went, having eulogized al-Munajjim.<sup>1</sup> We talked to each other of al-Munajjim's extreme instability, the mad pranks in which he indulged at times, and his abandonment of them at others. Then I said to the poet : And what is your position with him ?—He replied : I do not despair when he refuses, nor am I sanguine when he promises.—This might almost have been taken from the verses in which al-Hasan b. Raja was satirized, which are so well known that I do not reproduce them in their entirety, especially the last of them :

He gives or withholds, not from bounty or greed,  
But just as the fancy comes into his head.<sup>2</sup>

12. The following device was told me by a saintly man for the discovery of thefts. You should, he said, take a cup containing water, and a signet to which you are to attach a string, and which you should then let fall into the cup. Then write on five slips the names of the parties suspected of the theft, write *the thief* in the cup, and put on the edge of the cup one of the slips containing the name of a suspect. Then read over it the text, (Surah vii. 170) *And when we lifted the mountain above them as though it were an umbrella, and they thought that it would fall upon them : Take what we have given you with force and remember what is therein, perhaps ye may be cautious.* If the signet strike the cup, look at the slip, for the thief will be the person whose name it contains. If it do not strike the cup, then put another slip on the edge, for if the signet strike, that will contain the name of the thief.<sup>3</sup>

He also furnished the following for a runaway slave. Write the Opening Surah in a circle and write in the centre (Surah xxiv. 40) *Like darkness on a billowing sea, covered with wave over it wave, over it cloud, darkneses one above another, if a man stretch out his hand he can scarcely see it ; and he to whom God sets not light hath no light.* O God, make the earth, upper and lower, plain and mountain,

(1) This word means " astrologer ", but may here be a proper name.

(2) Al-Hasan b. Raja was a personage of the first half of the third century A.H. A satire upon him is mentioned in the Aghani, but it is not this.

(3) In *Islamica* 1980 I have published a magical prescription for finding a thief. The application of the Qur'anic text is obscure.



dry and wet in the heart of X son of Y narrower than a sheepskin till he return.

13. At a gathering in Baghdad attended by Abu 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Mansur, the Witness, generally called Ibn Kurdi, we were discussing the way wherein women get the better of men except in a few cases. Abu 'Ali said to me : We had a worthy old friend of the Qatî'ah,<sup>1</sup> who used to utter a parable about this. A bride's trousseau, he said, always contains a saddle and a bridle ; when the wedding ceremonies are over, if the bridegroom gets first hold of the saddle, saddles the bride, puts the bit in her mouth, and mounts, he becomes predominant partner. If he delay an instant, she will put the saddle on his back, and the bit in his mouth, and mount ; nor will she ever dismount except through divorce or death.

14. I was told the following by Abu'l-Fadl Muhammad b. 'Ubaidallah b. al-Marzuban, clerk of Shiraz. He had it from a Jewish collector, Sahl b. Nazir. My grandfather, said this latter, Sahl b. Nazir, who was vizier's collector of the revenue for a series of years, from the beginning of the civil war<sup>2</sup> till his death, told me the following. When 'Ubaidallah b. Sulaiman after serving al-Muwaffaq as vizier suffered his terrible reverse,<sup>3</sup> I foresaw that he would be promoted again ; so while he was in prison I used to transmit to his family every month a hundred dinars. When he was released, I went on sending them to him till he again became vizier. He recognized the service which I had rendered, did all he could for me, and thanked me profusely. Presently 'Ubaidallah inflicted a reverse on Jarâdah the Clerk<sup>4</sup> who had had control over 'Ubaidallah, the heads of bureaux, and the people in general. This Jarâdah had done me many a kindness, so I transmitted a hundred dinars every month to his family, sending the money down to Basrah. Without my knowledge 'Ubaidallah b. Sulaiman heard of this, and one day when I went to see him, he said to me : Good luck to you, Sahl, in your hostility to me !—I said : Who am I,

(1) Le Strange, *Baghdad*, p. 116 n. observes that this expression "The Fief" when used of W. Baghdad means the Zubaidiyyah, when of E. Baghdad the 'Ajamiyyah. Here it is likely that the former is intended.

(2) Probably this means the murder of Mutawakkil, 247 A.H., after which there was a lengthy period of anarchy.

(3) Described in Part viii.

(4) Mentioned by Tabari iii. 2131 (279 A.H.) as clerk to Isma'il b. Bulbul.

vizier, that I should show hostility to you ? I am the meanest cur at your gate !—I was prodigal in protestations of horror, and humility, and sobbed out : What can this mean ? If anything about me has been brought to the vizier's notice, let him inform me about it, as I may have some excuse or be able to prove it false.—He said : You are transmitting a hundred dinars every month to the family of Jarâdah. I said : Vizier, I have not been doing this, neither would I venture on such a proceeding. The man who has been doing this is the man who transmitted a hundred dinars monthly to the family of the vizier (whom God sustain !) in recognition of the benefits which the vizier had conferred upon him, and in recognition of benefits conferred on him by Jarâdah has been transmitting to Jarâdah's family the same amounts as he formerly sent to the family of the vizier.—The vizier blushed, hung his head and kept silence for a time ; presently his face began to stream with perspiration, and I said to myself : Now I am quite sure to be arrested and ruined, and I regretted having spoken.—Then the vizier raised his head, and said : You have done well, Sahl ; you shall meet with no further unpleasantness at my hands, neither do I harbour any further resentment. Continue to deal with them as you have been dealing, and do not be alarmed by what I said to you.

15. I was told the following by 'Ubaidallah b. Muhammad b. 'Abdallah al-Ahwazi. His authority was Abu'l-Fadl al-Balkhi, a jurist, and his al-Khalil b. Ahmad al-Sijistani, qadi of Sijistan. There came against us, he said, the commander of the army of Khurasan, sent by Nasr b. Ahmad,\* with a numerous host ; he made himself master of Sijistan, and his followers did much mischief in the land. They laid violent hands on the women in the streets. The inhabitants crowded to me and to another jurist (al-Balkhi gave his name, but I forget it), and complained of this state of affairs. We went with them to the general, whose presence was entered by myself, the jurist, and a number of leading men of the country. The jurist was first spokesman, and he spoke earnestly to the general, telling him what was going on. The general said to him : Shaikh, I could not suppose you to be so silly. I have with me some hundreds of thousands of men, whose wives are in Bokhara. They have to make substitutes of the women here, as best they can. I cannot make

\* The person meant is the second Samanid ruler of this name, who reigned 301-331 A.H. (913-942).

them disaffected to me by prohibiting them. So get out. We came away, and the crowd asked us what the commander had said. The jurist repeated the exact words<sup>1</sup>.—When they heard them, they said: This reply of his is criminal, and an incitement to crime, and open violation of God's command. Are we justified in fighting him on account of it?—The jurist said: Certainly, you are justified in fighting him.—They said: Then have we your permission?—You have, he replied.—The crowd hurried off, while we slunk away from the disturbance. By the time of the sunset prayer not a man of Khurasan remained in the place. An innumerable host of the inhabitants had assembled, and slaughtered a vast number of the men from Khurasan; this slaughter proceeded, and the house of the general was pillaged. They wanted to kill him, but he escaped on his horse, with as many of his followers as succeeded in making off, fleeing headlong. Never again did an army come to us from Khurasan.

16. The following was told me by Muhammad b. 'Abdallah b. Muhammad b. Mahrawaihi, ordinarily known as Ibn Abi 'Allan. His authority was Ibn Abi'l-Qasim. I was, he said, secretary to 'Ubaidallah b. al-Hasan b. Yusuf who was over the districts of Ahwaz. 'Ali b. 'Isa wrote to demand our accounts, and ordered 'Ubaidallah b. al-Hasan to make them up and proceed to present them to him. This was in 306.<sup>2</sup> So I made up the account and produced as total for the year 305 on account of the land-tax in Ahwaz and its districts, exclusive of the crown lands, a sum of 16,800,000 dirhems and a fraction. The whole of this had been collected and paid to the treasury, only a little over 40,000 dirhems remaining as arrears. The money due on the crown lands was similar in amount, only it did not come into our accounts.<sup>3</sup>

17. The following was told me by 'Abdallah b. 'Umar al-Harithi. My hair, he said, turned grey very early, and as this annoyed me, I bethought me I would dye my beard. In a dream I seemed to be consulting a physician on the subject of hair-dye. He said to me: You do not need a dye, as I will give you a prescription which will blacken the hair, preserve its colour and prevent the black from turning white. Take five drachms of cocoanut, a half

(1) They were grossly obscene, and have been softened down.

(2) At this time Hamid b. al-'Abbas was nominal vizier, but 'Ali b. 'Isa was practically in control of affairs.

(3) The purpose of this story would seem to be to indicate the value of these lands.

drachm's weight of yellow myrobalan, and a sixth of a drachm's weight of sal ammoniac. Pound the lot and mix with oil till it mingles, and anoint your hair with it. The hair will turn black. When I woke I recollected what I had heard and did accordingly. My hair became black and it was a long time before it began to turn grey.

18. *Unsuitable for translation.*

19. Al-Harithi also told me the following. My father, he said, who had an office at the court of Muwaffaq and of Mu'tadid after him, told me that Mu'tadid once wanted certified witnesses to attest a deed which commenced *This is attested by all the Witnesses that the Prince of Believers, God's servant Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mu'tadid billah bade them testify that he being sane and in control of his affairs.* I showed the deed to 'Ubaidallah b. Sulaiman who crossed it out, saying: This is unsuitable for issue in the Caliph's name; Write: *his body being sound and his judgment aright.*

20. The same al-Harithi said to me: I once asked a friend for a present of wine, and he sent me some that was sour. I sent it back with the message: Your neighbours deserve this rather than your friends.

The same man once described to me some new wine that he had been drinking. He said: This is a remedy for the mind, being made of the fruit of the anacardium. What he meant was that its operation was so weak that it would not intoxicate.<sup>1</sup>

21. The following was told me by Abu'l-Fath 'Abdallah b. Muhammad al-Burudi, a clerk. He had heard it, he said, from one of the chief clerks. Ibn al-Furat, he said, once asked his clerk Abu Mansur b. Jubair:<sup>2</sup> Which of us two is the more competent, myself or 'Ali b. 'Isa?—He said: The vizier is the more competent and the more economical.—None of that! said Ibn al-Furat.—Do you promise that nothing shall happen to me in consequence of my reply? asked the clerk.—I promise, said Ibn al-Furat.—He then said: When 'Ali b. 'Isa is in the Caliph's presence, and the latter wants him to write some secret message, he requires no other person; he himself writes, ties up, seals, puts into the post-bag, and sends it off.

(1) According to Ibn al-Jauzi (Anecdotes of Fools, p. 83) some supposed it to be good for the voice. Modern authorities say it affects the brain.

(2) He was a Christian named 'Abdullah, and is frequently mentioned in Hilal's *History of the Viziers*.

You on the other hand want the assistance of Zanji<sup>1</sup>, and Luti who holds his inkhorn. The project is frustrated through two persons becoming privy to it.—So, said Ibn al-Furat, you prefer 'Ali to me.—Assuredly not, I replied,<sup>2</sup> all I mean is that 'Ali b.'Isa is fit to be your clerk.

22. I was told by 'Abdallah b. Ahmad b. Dasah that once when Abu'l-Qasim al-Baridi<sup>3</sup> was in control of Basrah he had a drinking-party, and missed a crystal goblet which he greatly valued. His butlers made a search for it, but nothing was known about it. He swore that, if they did not produce it, he would scourge them. One of them said to him : Do not hurry, but order all who were present yesterday to appear.—He gave this order ; when the people were seated, he despatched a slave to the house of each one with the message : Send the crystal goblet which I brought you yesterday.—One of the messengers brought the goblet back from the house of one of them. This guest was disgraced, and lost his position.—The narrator proceeded : This is contrary to a story told of one of the Khosroes.<sup>4</sup> While he was drinking, his eye fell on a slave of his who had purloined a golden dish with its contents, and was making off with it. The king said nothing and the slave secured his spoil. The next day the treasurers missed it, and they came to the palace to search for it. The king called them, and said : Do not trouble to search for it, for it has been taken by one who will not return it, and he was seen by one who will not inform against him. So they desisted. A year later when the king was drinking, the slave entered wearing a golden girdle. The king whispered in his ear : Is this from that ?—The slave said : Yes.—The king said : If the dinars which you got for the dish are exhausted, inform me so that I may give you another.

23. The same person told me the following, which he had heard from Abu'l-Husain Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. al-Muthanna. When Hamid b. al-Abbas came to Ubeydullah on his way to Ahwaz, during his vizierate, I, he said, went out to meet him. I saw that he had a *harraqah*<sup>5</sup> with a crew of white eunuchs and a shaikh on deck reading the

(1) Ibn al-Furat's most faithful adherent. See Index to *Eclipse*.

(2) The change of person is the author's.

(3) Son of Abu 'Abdallah. In A.H. 332 he became supreme in Basrah. See *Eclipse*, v. 65.

(4) General name for the Persian kings of the Sassanian dynasty.

(5) See Index to the *Eclipse*, S. V. *Rivercraft*. It was a row-boat used for conveying women.

**Qur'an.** The vessel was covered and curtained all over. When I asked the reason for this, I was told that it was the vessel of the women-folk, and that it was improper for the crew of such a vessel to be virile.

He proceeded : Abu'l-Husain also told me the following : I went to see Ibn al-Jassas<sup>1</sup> at his palace in Baghdad. I saw there some white eunuchs engaged as barbers.

He proceeded : Abu'l-Husain further stated that he had seen two black eunuchs acting as guides to Abu'l-'Aina.<sup>2</sup>

24. He further told me the following, which had been told him by Abu'l-Husain. Abu'l-'Aina, he said, came to Basrah some time after the year 280, after long absence, during which he had been in the service of the Caliphs and viziers at Samarra. At that time Abu Khalifah<sup>3</sup> was the expert in Basrah on Tradition, History, lexicography, and grammar; Muhammad b. Ja'far b. Bassam was qadi of the city, well equipped in literature, lexicography, and poetry. I (said Abu'l-Husain) was in constant attendance on him, studying Law with him. He was the first person who befriended and promoted me. He said to me : Abu'l-Husain, Abu'l-'Aina has come, and I should like to bring about a meeting between him and Abu Khalifah, so that we might see which of the two is to be preferred.—I undertook to do this.—So, he said, I went and met Abu'l-'Aina, and obtained from him a promise that he would come to Ibn Bassam's house, and a similar promise from Abu Khalifah. So they met. Abu'l-'Aina began to recount anecdotes on the authority of al-Asma'i, and his interviews with Mutawakkil, Ibn Abi Du'ad,<sup>4</sup> and various other celebrities including poets. Abu Khalifah was silenced and could not compete with him, or come anywhere near him. We were loud in our eulogies of Abu'l-'Aina.—Qadi, he said, I have forgotten nothing that I have committed to memory for the last forty years.

25. He told me the following also, which he had heard from Abu 'Ubaid Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Ajurri.<sup>5</sup> I was, said the latter, with Abu'l-'Aina when he came to

(1) Famous millionaire about whom there is a story in Vol. i of the *Table-talk*.

(2) Famous wit, ob. 283 A.H. There is a biography of him in *Irshad* vii. He was blind. The reason for his employment of these persons will be found in the Arabic text.

(3) His name was al-Fadl b. al-Habbab, ob. 305. There is a short account of him in Dhahabi's *Classes of Traditionalists*.

(4) Chief qadi and favourite of the Caliph Mu'tasim,

(5) "The Brickmaker",

Basrah after 280 with drafts upon the finance ministers. There were with us certain Traditionalists. He was told that Ibn al-Muthanna had come to see him, and he rose supposing the visitor to be Abu 'Ali al-Hasan b. al-Muthanna.<sup>1</sup> One of those present informed him that it was Abu'l-Husain Ahmed the son of this person ; so that he sat down again before Abu'l-Husain came near. Abu'l-'Aina then bade Abu'l-Husain approach, addressed him courteously, and asked for news of his father.—

(*There is a lacuna in the MS. here.*)

26. . . . . And he said to me : I do not know. One day I was in the room of the qadi Musa b. Ishaq in Basrah, when he passed by us. The Traditionalists were present. Musa would allow no beardless youth to enter his room to hear Tradition, so when Musa saw him, he told his slave to remove him. We said : God exalt the qadi, this is the son of your brother Abu 'Ali b. al-Muthanna. Musa then gave him a front seat and treated him with respect.

27. The same person<sup>2</sup> told me the following, which he had heard from Abu'l-Husain. When I was grown up (he said) the qadi Abu Hazim<sup>3</sup> wrote to my father, saying : I am informed that you have a grown-up son who is a student, etc., (his expressions were very complimentary), so send him to me to be invested with the qadi-ship.—My father said to me : What say you to this ?—I said : Please send me, as you see how straitened our circumstances are, and possibly I may get a salary which will keep me in comfort. *My father said : No, do not go ;*<sup>4</sup> for offices come to an end, whereas integrity endures.

28. He also told me the following. We were told, he said, by one of our Shaikhs that Abu'l-'Aina went to the house of al-Wathiqi, who at that time was governor of Basrah, and was made to sit in the vestibule for a time while leave for him to enter was being asked. He started conversation and a man said to him in the course of a conversation which suggested it : Abu'l-'Aina, you are fasting to-day.—He said : Yes, I am, in this house.—A secret service-man sent word to al-Wathiqi of this, and the latter gave permission for him to come in at once, and

(1) His death-date was 294 A.H.

(2) See No. 22.

(3) Qadi appointed by Mu'tadid, about whom there are stories in vol. i. and in the *Irshad*.

(4) The words in italics are supplied by the translator,

offered excuses for his having been made to wait in the vestibule by the porters, whose conduct he reprehended.

Once, he proceeded, there was a meeting between Abu'l-'Aina and Abu 'Ali al-Basir<sup>1</sup> at a gathering, and Abu'l-'Aina treated the other disdainfully. Abu 'Ali said to him : We are both blind, so why this disdain ?—He said : No, we are not equal. You are one of the blind of the staff, whereas I am one of the blind of the mounts.<sup>2</sup>

29. I was told the following by Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Uthman b. al-Harith al-Zayyat. He had heard it from his father. A cloth-merchant, said the last, owed me and a number of traders in Baghdad four thousand dinars. He offered himself for examination, and we creditors met, and opened his shop, where we found goods worth four hundred dinars. He said : If you like to take these goods and give me my discharge, you can take them, for I have no other resource. But if you prefer to let the debt remain for a time, let me open my shop and trade with these four hundred dinars, I will pay you four hundred dinars each year, so that each creditor will receive one tenth of his property, and be paid in full in the course of ten years.—We agreed to the latter proposal<sup>3</sup> except one of us, who said : Let me have something over and above the tenth, if only one dinar.—We asked the man to assent to this.—He said : If I were to give one dinar more than the four hundred in the year, the four hundred dinars would by the end of nine years have disappeared and the arrears of the debt would remain where they were.—We were surprised by this statement and asked him to show us how it could be true.—He replied : Suppose I trade with these four hundred dinars for a year, and do well, the profit is four hundred dinars. Out of the total I pay 401 dinars, so that 399 remain. In the second year I trade with these, and make 798 dinars. Deduct 401, and there remain 397. At the end of the third year the sum will be 794 ; deduct 401 and 393 remain. At the end of the fourth year the sum will be 786 ; deduct 401 and 385 remain. At the end of the fifth year the sum will be 770 ; deduct 401 and 369 remain. At the end of the sixth year the sum will be 738 ; deduct 401 and 337

(1) A famous man of letters, whose name was al-Fadl b. Ja'far, who was blind, though called " the sharp-eyed ".

(2) The retort does not seem very witty. Apparently he meant that he belonged to a higher class of society.

(3) Of course interest on money lent was forbidden by Muslim law, though we find numerous cases in which it was taken.



remain. At the end of the seventh year the sum will be 674; deduct 401, and 273 remain. At the end of the eighth year the sum will be 546; deduct 401, and 145 remain. At the end of the ninth year the sum will be 290, which will be less by 111 than the 401 due.

So he offered them 400 and the company agreed to restrict themselves to that amount. The man proceeded to open his shop and do business, and succeeded.<sup>1</sup>

30. He also told me the following, which he had heard from his father. Suppose, he said, that a purse contains a thousand dirhems. Say you take out one dirhem at a time, and no other dirhem is put in, the whole purse will become emptied; if this be by trading, through trading at a loss: if by mere expenditure, no proof is needed. Wealth is preserved by surplus, and it is profit which enriches the trader.

31. I was told the following by 'Ubaidallah b. Ahmad b. Dasah, who had it from Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. 'Ubaidallah the Hanefite Jurist, who was an Armenian. He said: The jurist Abu Zuhair al-Jubba'i was a man of honour, well skilled in Abu Hanifah's system. When he came to Baghdad, he was told of the high character of Abu'l-Hasan al-Karkhi. When they met, Abu Zuhair said to the other: Abu'l-Hasan, I am told that you take pay from the government as a jurist.—He admitted that he did.—Abu Zuhair said: Can a man of such practical piety as yourself do this?—Abu'l-Hasan said: Did not al-Hasan al-Basri (God be pleased with him)<sup>2</sup> take pay in his time, and So-and-so?—He proceeded to enumerate a number of saints and jurists who had taken pay from the Umayyads.—Abu Zuhair said to him: Your ignorance of the reason is even more extraordinary than your accepting the pay. The Umayyads came to grief in religious matters, but their collection of the revenue was sound; they defrauded no-one either in the matter of tithe or land-tax. So the jurists could accept some of their money, since it was honestly acquired. As for the present rulers,<sup>3</sup> their religious principles are sound, but their finance is corrupt; their collection is fraudulent and dishonest.—Abu'l-Hasan had no answer, and when the

(1) The text of this passage is very corrupt, but the argument is clearly what has been given. It rests on the grossly improbable assumption that in each year he would make exactly a hundred per cent. profit on his capital.

(2) Famous saint, *ob.* 110, A.H.

(3) The 'Abbasids.

time arrived for the receipt of his stipend, he put in no claim, but let it pass, and took no salary till his death.<sup>1</sup> 'Ubaidallah b. Dasah told me that this Zuhair<sup>2</sup> was the teacher of Abu Muhammad b. 'Abdal, from whom the latter learned jurisprudence according to the systems of our school;<sup>3</sup> and Abu Muhammad b. 'Abdal was my own instructor in jurisprudence. I studied under him, and had lengthy interviews with him, but I never heard the above anecdote from him.<sup>4</sup>

32. He also told me the following, which he had heard from 'Abdallah b. Mu'adh. When a man becomes old, he said, he develops three undesirable characteristics. In order to rise he presses his hands on the ground; when he walks he displays lameness; when he coughs, he cannot stop.

33. He also told me the following on the same authority. I was told, he said, the following by a shaiikh of Madhar.<sup>5</sup> I had, said he, some agricultural land in an estate; it was very fertile and rich. I had high hopes of its productivity. One night I saw in a dream two persons going round the cultivated fields, and one said to the other: Write the produce of So-and-so one *kurr*, and of someone else two *kurr*. I recollected the names. The calculation proceeded till it reached my lands, when he said: Now write the produce of this person as three *kurr*. I said to him: God bless you, why, I have been hoping for ten *kurr* and more. But he said to his companion: Write three *kurr*.—Next morning I woke wondering, and rose. Before a few days had passed a disaster overtook the crops, from which some people escaped, whereas others were overwhelmed. My neighbours and I started reaping, and, to be sure, my crop came to three *kurr* exactly without a *qafiz* more or less.<sup>6</sup> I enquired about the people whose names I had treasured in my memory, and the amount of their crops, and found that the amount exactly coincided with those which I had dreamed.

34. I have heard from many trustworthy sources that Mu'izz al-daulah said: No lucky person ever slept

(1) An annotator of the MS. says this statement about the Umayyads is false: meaning that they were as unscrupulous in finance as their successors: and that is certainly the view of the historians.

(2) Son of the Abu Zuhair of the last anecdote.

(3) Probably the Mu'tazils.

(4) Since the author was himself a judge, this doctrine would be of importance to him.

(5) "Capital of Maisan between Wasit and Basrah" (Yaqt).

(6) A *kurr* contained 60 *qafiz*.

between dawn and sunrise. For a foreigner such as he was this is a creditable saying. It belongs originally to the Prince of Believers, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, who recorded that the Prophet said My people are blessed in their early rising.<sup>1</sup>

35. I was told the following by Abu Ahmad b. Abi'l-Hasak, the Witness. The qadi Abu 'Umar,<sup>2</sup> he said, used constantly to pass by the door of our house on his way to his estate called Salihyyah, while I was a lad and later till I became a young man. I heard then how one day, when he had passed by and reached the bank of the Isa Canal, he saw a man in the water who was crying out that he was drowning. Abu 'Umar had with him only one slave ; he rode his ass up to an eminence and shouted at the top of his voice : You people, you people ! This he did a number of times, but no-one answered, as the place was deserted and the road stopped. So he dismounted, unravelled a turban which he was wearing, flung it to the man, while grasping the end with one hand, whereas with the other he took hold of a tree which was there. He said to the man : You need not be afraid, only pull at the turban with all your might.—The man proceeded to pull at it, and so draw nearer to the bank till ultimately he scrambled up the bank, when he fell in a faint. Some people who were passing saw the qadi in this position, thanked and blessed him, and hurrying to the man squeezed the water out of him ; and the man was rescued and survived.<sup>3</sup>

36. The same person told me the following. I was told, he said, by our shaikhs that Muhammad b. Sulaiman b. 'Ali al-Hashimi was one day seated in a room in his estate called al-Muhdathah (" the new ") outside Basrah. The room overlooked a garden, in a corner of which there was a large urn of porcelain filled with the perfume Ghaliyah. A number of humble folk came to make requests, and one of them, who was in a wretched condition, seeing the ghaliyah, stole a considerable amount, scooping it out with his hand, and then placing it on his head, which he proceeded to cover with his turban. The visitors sat for a long time, and when they rose, he did the like, but could not see. He called to them : Take hold of my hand, for

---

(1) In the Musnad of Ahmad b. Hanbal i. 73, the saying takes the form " Sleep in the morning keeps away sustenance".

(2) Chief qadi in Baghdad in the time of Muqtadir. See Index to the *Eclipse*.

(3) The qadi's conduct left something to be desired.

I am blind.—Muhammad b. Sulaiman was deeply distressed, and had a physician brought immediately. The physician asked the man what had happened to him, but the man would not tell the truth. So the physician ordered his head to be uncovered, when he saw the ghaliyah, on which he poured cold water till no trace of the perfume remained; he then treated the man with sandal,<sup>1</sup> rose-water, and camphor, and made him stand for a time in the open air. His sight then returned to its normal soundness.

37. He also told me the following, which he had heard from Abu'l-Hasan Muhammad b. Ishaq b. 'Abbad al-Najjar, one of the most respected date merchants in Basrah. He lived long, and taught traditions; I myself<sup>2</sup> wrote from his dictation, but I did not hear him tell this anecdote.—There was, he said, in our neighbourhood a certain man, who gave alms one night to a blind man by whom he passed. He had intended to open one of two purses which were in his pocket, one of them containing gold and the other dirhems,<sup>3</sup> and to give the blind man a dirhem. He gave him a dinar. The blind man went off, not doubting that what he had was a dirhem. He called at a grocer's, with whom he dealt, and bade him take the dirhem, calculate how much the blind man owed him, and give him the change, which would be so much. The grocer said to him: My friend, whence have you this coin?—He said: So-and-so gave it me yesterday.—The grocer told him it was a dinar, and bade him take it. The blind man took it, and on the following day went to the man, and said: You gave me this coin as alms, but I think you intended to give me a dirhem, and as I do not think it right to take it through a mistake, please take it back.—The other said to him: I give it to you, and when the first day of each month comes, come to me and I will give you something more as a reward for your honesty.—After that the blind man used to come to him on the first day of every month, and he would give him five dirhems. He added: I have seen nothing more extraordinary than the honesty of the grocer and the blind man. Had such a thing happened in this time, quite the contrary would have taken place.<sup>4</sup>

He added: Ibn 'Abbad went on to say that the blind

(1) *i.e.*, sandal-wood powder.

(2) The author of the *Table-talk* is speaking.

(3) A silver coin.

(4) The weak point in the story is the blind man not being able to tell the one coin from the other by the weight.

man of the above anecdotes used to recite the Qur'an according to the seven orthodox recensions, and I could hear him reciting the whole night. Being poor, when it was day, he used to go out to beg alms, and I could hear him reciting in the street edifying and ascetic verses; I never heard him solicit alms with any other form of recitation. I said to him one day: My friend, you know the Qur'an by heart, and I notice that you beg with edifying verses. Why do you not recite the Qur'an for this purpose as the blind do?—He said: No, never shall I make of the Qur'an an instrument of mendicancy.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

*(To be continued).*

## THE TABLE-TALK OF A MESOPOTAMIAN JUDGE

### PART II.

(*Continued from our last issue.*)

38. I was told the following by Abu Muhammad,<sup>1</sup> who had it from al-Suraji, a respected shaikh who was a neighbour of ours. He said : I had a pious wife, who, whenever I bought meat for her to cook for us, would cook it, stewing it all ; she would then bring it to me, and I, having a good appetite, would eat the whole, leaving her and the children to go hungry.—I told her when she cooked any food to divide it into two shares, bring me one, and leave the other for herself and the children.—She said : No, I will not do that. I will bring the whole to you, so that you may eat the best of it ; for you will have to answer about it.

39. Abu'l-Hasan b. Abi'l-Laith recited to me the following verses by himself :

I stifled my passion, my censor obeying,  
And did what my rival about me was saying ;

And when I possessed thee, my fervent desire,  
I sold thee devoutly to him who bid higher.

I crave for no illness : a chance there is still  
To see thee as caller, if I should fall ill.

40. I was told the following by Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Zayyat, which he had heard from Abu Bakr b. Huri, a shaikh who having originally belonged to Khamiyah,<sup>2</sup> a district belonging to Nahrawan, had resided in Baghdad for many years, and was celebrated for his association with Abu 'Abdallah b. Abi 'Auf.<sup>3</sup> I used, he said, to frequent the company of Ibn Abi 'Auf for a number

(1) *i.e.* 'Abdallah b. Dasah.

(2) This name seems unknown to the geographers.

(3) A favourite of the vizier 'Ubaidallah b. Sulaiman. A series of stories about him is to be found in Vol. i of the *Table-talk*, pp. 180-183.

of years, owing to our being neighbours and attached to each other. I never addressed any request to him, as no occasion for one arose. I used, however, to display activity in carrying out commissions with which he entrusted me. It was my practice to come to him every night after the second evening prayer, when he had come home after performing it. When he saw me he would place his foot on my lap, and while massaging it I would converse with him. He would ask me for the news, and occurrences in Baghdad. Hence I was in the habit of making inquiries about them from all sources, in order to convey them to him. So I could report to him arrivals and departures, deaths and births, lawsuits, inheritances, rumours of appointments, news of our neighbours, trifling affairs and weighty affairs, till he grew tired; when this occurred, he would withdraw his foot, and I would rise and go home; and by this time a third, more or less, of the night would have passed. Things went on in this way for some years. At last one day I received a visit from a haberdasher with whom I dealt, who said to me: I have got into a trouble which, if it materializes, will impoverish me.—I asked him what it was.—He said: A man with whom I had dealings incurred debts to me which amounted to a thousand dinars. When I demanded payment, he gave me as a pledge a necklace of gems valued at a thousand dinars, which he was to redeem within some months after which I might sell it, for which he gave permission. Yesterday Mu'nīs the Virile, chief of police,\* sent a man to raid my shop. He opened my strong-box and took away the necklace, and has gone into hiding.—I said to him: Do not trouble about this, as I will speak to Abu 'Abdallah b. Abi 'Auf on the subject, and he will compel the man to restore the necklace humbly.—I, said he, relied on Ibn Abi 'Auf owing to my intimacy with him and his influence with Mu'tadid. When night came I went to him; he placed his foot on my lap according to his custom, I reported to him the news, and related to him among other things the affair of the haberdasher and Mu'nīs. Then I said: This tradesman is my neighbour and a man with whom I deal, so that he has the best of claims upon me. So I must ask you to be so good as to attend to his interests and make Mu'nīs restore his necklace.—He said: What business is this of mine? Am I to make an enemy of the

---

\* See *Eclipse* iv. 8. He was so called to distinguish him from the famous commander-in-chief who was a eunuch. He was appointed chief of police in 296, at the beginning of Muqtadir's reign: the context implies that he had held the office in the reign of Mu'tadid.

Caliph's chief of police ! And how dare you expose me to such a risk and solicit such a favour ? I fancy I can hear you saying : Ibn Abi 'Auf is my friend, so I will make him restore this article. You do not consider my dignity ; the welfare of the haberdasher is dearer to you than the security of my position ! No, God bless you, this is no concern of mine.—This reply wounded me deeply, and I said to myself : Here have I been serving this man so many years, discharging more menial duties than a slave, never asking for anything, never requiring any service from him, receiving no wage and no bonus, and when I once ask him a favour I meet with this sort of reception ! God be my witness that never again shall I enter his house.—However, I restrained myself, remained seated without speaking, and rose before my usual time, returning home in a great state of depression. Next morning I started out early for fear the man should come to me on account of his affair, and I should be disgraced in his eyes. So I did not enter my house till sunset ; then I came home, performed prayer, threw myself on a couch and made up my mind that I would not go to Ibn Abi 'Auf. When I had performed the second evening prayer one of his servants came to me and said : The shaikh sends greeting and wishes to know why you have delayed your visit to-night. If you are in good health, come ; but if you are suffering, we will come to you.—Feeling shame, I said : I will go to-night, and afterwards leave off.—When I entered and he saw me, he stretched out his foot to my lap, and I took it and massaged it as usual.—He asked what news I had.—So I began to tell him some stories clumsily made up. He put up with this for a time, then withdrew his foot, and I rose. He said : Abu Bakr, see what is under the praying-mat. I found there was a letter wrapped in common paper. Taking this I approached the candle and found that it contained the following : Mu'nis, you have dared to raid the shop of a tradesman named So-and-so, and opened his strong-box and removed a necklace of gems worth a thousand dinars, and this while I am still alive. By Allah, were this not a first offence committed by you, there would have been no discussion of the subject. Proceed yourself to the man's shop and replace the necklace in his strong-box publicly with your own hand. I said to Ibn Abi 'Auf : Sir, what is this ?—He said : Mu'tadid's autograph to Mu'nis containing the order which you wanted. I have been comparing your displeasure and reproaches, and the maintenance of my



present relations with Mu'nis, with your satisfaction and the discharge of my obligation to you and the irritation of Mu'nis ; and I have preferred you to him. So I obtained the autograph order of the Prince of Believers for what you wish ; go and convey it to him, and he will do what he is ordered to do.—I kissed his head, thanked him, and went off, beside myself for joy, came to the man, took him by the hand, and went with him to Mu'nis, to whom I delivered the order. When he read it, his face turned black, and he trembled so that the paper fell from his hand. Then he said : My friend, Allah is my witness that this is a matter of which I knew not, and which has falsely been ascribed to me. Why did you not complain to me, and then, if I refused to do you justice, to the vizier ? How comes it that you have brought it to the Prince of Believers in the first instance ?—Taking courage, I said : This happened with your cognizance, and the necklace is in your possession.—He produced the necklace, and said : Take the thousand dinars which the man owes at once, and write out a statement to the effect that the man's charge is false.<sup>1</sup>—I said : We refuse.—He said : Take fifteen hundred dinars.—I said : By Allah, were you to offer us a million dinars, nothing less would satisfy us than your proceeding in person to the shop with the necklace and restoring it to the strong-box. We shall not make liars of ourselves. Else return the autograph order.—Mu'nis then bade his mount be saddled, and rode—this is a fact—with his train and stopped at the man's shop, where he replaced the necklace in the strong-box with his own hands. The same day the owner of the necklace came and paid the thousand dinars and got back his necklace.<sup>2</sup>

41. I was told the following by 'Abdallah b. Ahmad b. Dasah, who had heard it from Abu Ahmad b. Abi Hasak the Witness, who had heard it in Egypt from Abu Tahir Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abdallah b. Nasr<sup>3</sup> who at the time was qadi there. I was told, he said, by a shaikh who was our neighbour in Baghdad in the Street of the

---

(1) It is not clear how the narrator knew that the Chief of Police was in possession of the necklace or how he induced him to confess.

(2) He means apparently a statement to the effect that the police officer had not robbed the man's shop.

(3) He was appointed to the office in 348 A.H., held it till 366, and died in 367. See Guest's *Kindi*, Index.

Sheepshead dealers<sup>1</sup> in the Damascus Gate quarter<sup>2</sup> that Abu 'Abdallah b. Abi Du'ad,<sup>3</sup> when he was still in humble circumstances, lived at the Damascus Gate, and we were acquainted with his condition. One day he sold a kerchief for seven dirhems, as he had no other means of obtaining food. Feeling thirsty, as he was walking he saw a man drinking; so he turned in that direction and asked the man to give him a drink. The man proceeded to break off the lip of the mug which he had, then filled it and handed it to Ibn Abi Du'ad, who asked him why he had done this. The man replied: A man before you drank from that part of the vessel, and I did not like you to put your lips where his had been; so I broke off the part in order that you might drink from a place which no other person's lips had touched. Ibn Abi Du'ad proceeded to drink, and then handed the man the seven dirhems which were his sole possession.

42. I was told the following by Abu'l-Husain Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. al-Muthanna. My mother, he said, had seen the Night of Qadr,<sup>4</sup> and offered many prayers to God. Next morning my father said to her: Did you pray God for me?—She replied: Prayer for your children distracted me from praying for you.—He added: After that we supposed that the favours which God bestowed upon us were due to her prayers.

43. I was told the following by the Shirazi clerk Abu'l-Fadl Muhammad b. 'Ubaidallah b. al-Marzuban. *This story illustrates the physical strength of Abu'l-Haija b. Hamdan, who played a heroic part in the defence of al-Qahir; see Index to the Eclipse, p. 51. It is quite unsuitable for translation.*

44. I was told the following by 'Abdallah b. Ahmad b. Dasah, who had heard it from Abu Sahl b. Ziyad al-Attar (perfume-merchant). There was in Iskaf<sup>5</sup> a witty

(1) Not mentioned by Le Strange, but occurring in the *Irshad* i. 312, 5. There was a street in Meccah occupied by similar tradesmen, Azraqi 456, 3 and 8.

(2) According to Le Strange at a later time there was a village of this name.

(3) See No. 24.

(4) The meaning seems to be that she had learned by revelation which was the Night of Qadr, which was one of the nights of Ramadan, but it was uncertain which. In a poem quoted by Maqqari i. 572 it is determined by the day of the week with which the fast of Ramadan commences: hence it may be any odd night from the 17th to the 29th. But this view is not ordinarily accepted.

(5) In Lower Nahrawan: between Baghdad and Wasit on the Eastern side of the Tigris. (Yaqt).

poet, who satirized the governor. The latter, hearing of this, did nothing, only when harvest-time came, he rode to the granary, apportioned the contents,<sup>1</sup> and carried off the whole of the poet's crops. The poet went to him to complain and mollify him. The governor said: My friend, there is no further transaction between us. You satirized us with odes, we satirize you with oats. Hence we are quits.

45. I was told the following by Muhammad b. 'Adi b. Hurr and several of the people of Basrah. When Abu'l-Husain Muhammad b. 'Ubaid b. Nasrawaihi,<sup>2</sup> who was so eminent and so courageous, and so well known for his sagacity, craft, learning, and intelligence, learned of the backwardness of his son, who is still surviving, he was deeply distressed. One day, when he was seated, this son came running towards him as though about some important business; but all he did was to pull out a tuft of hair that overhung his father's ear and run away. The father not only felt pain but was grieved to find that his son's stupidity had reached such a level. When we expressed our sympathy he said: Fire is succeeded by ashes.<sup>3</sup>

46. I was told the following by Abul-Husain b. Muhammad al-Jubba'i. When Abu Tahir al-Husain b. al-Hasan, governor of Basrah,<sup>4</sup> by intriguing against the above-mentioned Abu'l-Husain b. Nasrawaihi succeeded in bringing about his second downfall, wherein the vizier al-'Abbas b. al-Husain compelled him to pay his heavy fine, he sent to Abu Tahir the following message: You should know that the skilful fowler does not slaughter his decoy-bird. I have acted the part of decoy for you in this land with the traders and the people in general. They have been regarding you as a just man while you have been taking what you chose from the middle and lower classes, your procedure being concealed. By your treatment of me you have become like a fowler who has slaughtered his decoy-bird, and has no further intention of fowling. You will find out that you will get no good from yourself nor from the land after me.—Ibn

(1) The procedure indicated would seem to be that the crops of the different owners were all collected together for deduction of the government's share, the remainder being returned to the owners.

(2) He was qadi; see Index to the *Eclipse*. Several stories in which he figures are told in Vol. i. of the *Table-talk*.

(3) *i.e.* so brilliant a parent as myself would naturally have an abnormally stupid son.

(4) See *Eclipse* v. 314 for his career and death in 360. The historian records his ruin with evident satisfaction.

Nasrawaihi then proceeded to intrigue against Abu Tahir with the vizier Abu'l-Fadl al-'Abbas b. al-Husain,<sup>1</sup> who before he left Basrah arrested and ruined him, giving the governorship to Abu'l-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Husain b. Ibrahim, sister's son to Abu'l-Faraj Muhammad b. al-'Abbas b. Fasanjas. Abu Tahir was fined a vast sum which he was unable to pay, and perished under the torture which was inflicted on him. He died in prison and he with his family were extirpated. This was all devised by Abu'l-Husain, who arranged that they should suffer.

47. The following was told me by Muhammad b. Hulail b. 'Abdallah. We were told, he said, by the qadi Ahmad b. Sayyar,<sup>2</sup> that he had heard it from a certain Sufi. I, he said, with a number of other people accompanied a Sufi shaikh on a journey. He dilated on the topics of Reliance and Sustenance, and the weakness and the strength of the mind in these matters. Then he said : I solemnly vow that I shall taste no food unless some hot almond and honey jelly be brought me in a bowl, nor shall I eat this except after I have been adjured to do so.—Now we were walking in the open country, and the rest of the company said : That man is a fool !—We walked on and he did the like, and presently we came to a village. Two days and two nights passed, and he took no food. All except me left him, as he had flung himself down in a mosque in the village, surrendering himself to death of inanition. I remained watching him. At midnight on the fourth night, when the shaikh was nearly dead, suddenly the door of the mosque was opened, and there entered a black slave-girl holding a covered dish. When she saw us she asked whether we were strangers or of the village. We replied : Strangers.—She uncovered the dish, and therein was a bowl of almond and honey jelly, boiling hot. She bade us eat, and I bade the shaikh do so.—He refused. I said to him : By Allah you shall eat—in order to make him keep his oath.<sup>3</sup>—He said : I will not.—Thereupon the girl lifted her hand and cuffed him violently, and said : By Allah, if you do not eat I will keep on cuffing you till you do.—Then he said : Eat with me.—So we ate till we had cleaned out the bowl. The girl then started to

(1) Vizier of 'Izz al-daulah Bakhtiyar. His visit to Basrah is mentioned in *Eclipse* v. 315.

(2) He was qadi in 348 A.H., apparently in Baghdad, and was employed in important negotiations. See *Eclipse*, v. 190. There are some references to him in Vol. i. of the *Table-talk*.

(3) That he would not eat unless adjured.

depart ; but we said to her : Stay where you are and tell us about yourself and this bowl.—She said : Very well. I am the handmaid of a man who is chief of this village, a foolish man with a sharp temper. A little while ago he asked us for almond and honey jelly, so we went to prepare it. It is winter and cold, so before we had got the ingredients from the store, kindled the fire, and got the jelly to set, he called for it, thinking we were slow. We said Yes, then he asked for it a second time, before it was ready, then a third time ; he then became angry, and swore with the sanction of divorce that neither he nor any member of his household, nor any dweller in the village should eat it ; only a stranger should do so. So we put it into the bowl, and went out to look for some stranger in the mosques. We found no-one till we came to this mosque, where we found you two. Had this shaikh not eaten it, I should have beaten him without mercy till he did eat, in order that my mistress should not be divorced from her husband.—The shaikh said : How think you when he desires to receive sustenance?<sup>1</sup>

48. The same person told me the following also after Ahmad b. Sayyar. I was told, he said, by a shaikh who traded in Oman that once, when he was in Ubullah meaning to start on a voyage, he saw a beggar at the door of a mosque who had an elegant tongue and begged in a refined fashion.—I, he said, was moved to pity, and gave the man some good dirhems. I hurried off at once to Oman where I stayed some months ; then I was fated to travel to China, which I reached safely. One day when I was looking round I saw this same man standing in the street asking alms. Looking carefully I recognized him, and said to him : Good gracious, begging at Ubullah and begging in China !—He said : I have come into this place three times before and this is my fourth visit. I have been seeking a means of subsistence, but cannot find any except *kudyah*.<sup>2</sup> So I alternate between Ubullah and here.—I was astonished at the man's hopeless ill-luck.

49. He also told me the following, which he had heard

---

(1) *i.e.* when the person who relies on God desires miraculous sustenance, you must now see that he is sure to obtain it.

(2) It seems impossible to find any suitable rendering of this word, which designates the mode of life followed by the hero of Hariri's *Maqamahs*, who employs his command of the Arabic language in order to raid people's pockets.

from the qadi of qadis<sup>1</sup> Abu Muhammad b. Ma'ruf. I was told, he said by a citizen of Baghdad that Abu 'Abdallah b. Abi 'Auf<sup>2</sup> related the following narrative. On a certain occasion, he said, I felt severely depressed, without knowing the reason. I ordered a quantity of food and fruit and a number of slave-girls to be conveyed to a garden of mine on the Isa canal.<sup>3</sup> I gave orders to my slaves and friends that none of them should bring me any message calculated to occupy my mind, not even if all my fortune were to be lost; they were not to write to me. I designed to stay in the garden the remainder of the week, amusing myself with those slave-girls. So I mounted my ass, having been preceded by all that I had ordered to be conveyed. As I approached the garden I was met by a messenger with letters. I asked him whence he came, and he replied: From Raqqah. I was curious to know the contents of his letters, the news of Raqqah and prices there. I asked the man whether he knew who I was. He said he did. I said to him: You are close to a garden which belongs to me, so come along with me, and I will give you some dinars, a change of clothing, and food. You will rest for the night in the garden, and enter Baghdad to-morrow.—He agreed, and walked back with me into the garden. I ordered the people there to take him to a bath that was there, give him some of my servants' clothes in lieu of those he was wearing, and food. They hurried him off for these purposes, and I ordered a sharp servant of mine to steal his letters. He brought them to me, I opened them, read all their contents, and learned many of the secrets of the traders with whom I dealt. This pleased me very much, and I found all the letters crammed with orders to the dealers to hold on to any oil which they had, and sell none. For oil was getting dear and scarce, and so they were advised to hold fast what they had.—I immediately sent and summoned my agents. When they arrived I bade them obtain at once from various cashiers<sup>4</sup> all the gold and silver coins in their

(1) Title of the chief qadi in Baghdad, higher than that of *Aqda al-qudat* (*Irshad al-arib* v. 409.) Ibn Ma'ruf ('Abdallah b. Ahmad) died A.H. 381, three years before our author; the formula which follows his name here indicates that he was already dead. Unless therefore this formula was added by a copyist, the author must have introduced anecdotes into the early parts of his work at different periods.

(2) See above, anecdote 41.

(3) From the Euphrates to the Tigris; see Le Strange's *Baghdad*.

(4) These would seem to be clerks in the employ of the narrator. Had he referred to bankers the expression would have been different.

possession, and before the day was over purchase as much oil as they could. At the close of the day they were to write to me the result. They departed, and when evening came I received information that they had purchased oil for 3,000 dinars. I wrote and told them to obtain some more thousands of dinars and go on buying as much oil as they could. Next morning I gave the messenger three dinars, and told him that if he would stop with me he should have three more. He agreed to do so, and presently I received notice that my agents had purchased oil for 4,000 dinars, and that owing to their demand the price had begun to move. Again I wrote to them to go on buying all they could, even if the price had advanced. I put off the messenger's departure for a third day, giving him on the two days six dinars; he remaining three days in all. My agents proceeded to buy for another 3,000 dinars, and reported to me in the evening that they had been paying five per cent. higher than for their previous purchases, and that no oil to speak of was left in the market. I now dismissed the messenger and remained some days in my garden, after which I returned home. Meanwhile the dealers had read their correspondence and ascertained the state of the oil supply at Raqqah. They came knocking at my door and offered me an advance of twenty per cent. on what I had paid. I refused to sell. They then offered thirty per cent., and I again refused. A month passed and they came offering fifty and sixty per cent., and still I declined. After some days they came and offered cent. per cent. and I thought to myself that it would be a mistake to refuse that profit, so I sold for 20,000 dinars. So when I reflected I found that the sole cause of my depression and my retirement to my garden on that day was the pleasure of Almighty God that a profit of ten thousand dinars should come into my hands.

50. The same person told me the following, which he had heard from a goldsmith named Tahir, who was employed in the treasury of Mu'izz al-daulah. One day, he said, I was drinking in my house with a number of my friends. Our supply of wine failed, and I went out to devise some plan of getting them some. I was met by a courier who told me that I was wanted by the prince. I said: Tell him you could not find me.—He declined. I offered him a dinar to say that he had been unable to find me, but he again declined. While I was talking to him, up comes another courier; I offered them two dinars, but they refused. A third courier now arrived, so I went,

taking with me a slave of mine. When I came into the presence of the prince, he said to me : Go and see what 'Ali the Singer says to you in the Treasury and do it.—I went to the Treasury and asked 'Ali what he wanted. He produced a number of gold belts such as are fastened without swords,<sup>1</sup> which had been inherited by Mu'izz al-daulah from his sister. She used to gird her slave-girls with them over the shirts and jackets with which she clothed them, this constituting their livery. When they came into Mu'izz al-daulah's possession, he disapproved of them, and ordered them to be broken up, and fabricated into saddles, swords, and Persian belts.<sup>2</sup> So he told me to sit down and pick out the gold, so that we might see how much could be collected for fabrication.—I told him that I had not my tools with me.—He bade me send someone to fetch them. I sent my slave, and he brought some of the tools. I proceeded to remove the metal, and pilfer when the Singer was not looking, putting it into my pocket or under my turban, or throwing it to my slave. When he had secured some, I would say to him : Bring the other file, this one has got blunt, you must go and bring me another, or fetch some particular tool.—He, having secured the plunder, would go and fetch the tool, when I would resume the pilfering, give him the plunder, and demand some other tool. I continued in this style till evening, when 'Ali the Singer collected the belts, and made me promise to return the next day with workmen and the partner who had been appointed to work with me in the treasury. I then left the place, and when I weighed the metal which I had secured, I found it to be 480 *mithqal*.<sup>3</sup> I said to myself : I have been forcibly driven into this fortune, which I have obtained after offering a bribe of two dinars to be excused going. I told my friends the story,<sup>4</sup> and the next day the workmen and my partner appeared, and we began to take the rest of the belts to pieces. We secured something more, but did not succeed in pilfering more than 160 *mithqal*, which I had to share with my partner. I marvelled at my luck.

#### 51. I was told the following by Abu'l-Hasan Thabit

(1) The word in the text is used for a belt to which a sword was ordinarily attached (Dozy).

(2) Probably this means sword-belts.

(3) Said to be a drachm and three sevenths.

(4) One fancies a negative must have been omitted, since Mu'izz al-daulah would have been a dangerous person to deal with in this style.



b. Ibrahim b. Zahrun the Harranian and Sabian physician<sup>1</sup> who had it from his father. One day, he said, I was attending on Muwaffaq, and he said to me : Ibrahim, for two years I have been longing for something, but thought it improper to ask for it. It has just occurred to me to secure your help in securing it.—I said to him : It is for the Prince of Believers<sup>2</sup> to command.—Well, he said, for a number of years I have had a desire for fowls' livers and gizzards stewed ; I have thought it improper to ask for them, lest my chef should think my craving for them was due to my grudging the kitchen employees what is normally their perquisite, to take and sell. So I want you, when the table has been brought in and you have sat down with me to a meal, to desire this on my account, and recommend it medically, so that I may order them to select some small portion of it to be brought to the table, regularly every day ; the amount will be too small to affect them, and they will be able to sell the remainder, which will still be considerable. Thus I shall have gratified my craving.—I was, said Ibrahim, astonished at his generosity and sense of shame before his servants, which could make him invent an excuse whereby he could gratify his appetite without alarming them or exposing himself to their censure.—The table was brought in and he sat at it eating by himself, whilst I sat with his companions eating at a table in front of his. When he had started his meal, I said : Why does not the Prince of Believers al-Nasir<sup>3</sup> order some small dishes of fattened fowls' liver and gizzards with eggs and brine to be taken and pounded, and enjoy a little of it ? It has certain properties—which I enumerated according to what at the moment came into my head. We too, I added, should like a little of it.—He said : To-morrow let there be prepared for us so many dishes of beaten-up eggs and so many of fattened fowls' liver and gizzards.—The food was prepared and was regularly produced ; no-one of the servants guessed the truth about it.

52 I was told the following by 'Ubaidallah b. Ahmad b. Bakir who had it from the Hanafi jurist Abu Ja'far al-Dabbi. (I was personally acquainted with this latter, who was a leading trader of good character, and a jurist

---

(1) According to Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah he was an old man when 'Adud al-daulah took Baghdad, A.H. 367. The Sabi'ans of Harra practised the medical art, and furnished several distinguished names.

(2) Muwaffaq had no right to this title, which was Mu'tamid's.

(3) Also a title of Muwaffaq.

who used to attend my father's debating room and argue; <sup>1</sup> I did not hear this narrative from him.)—He said : A leading trader of Siraf told me that two persons were walking in the street, when they saw a purse containing dirhems lying in the road. One of the pedestrians said to the other : Take it and guard it for the owner.—The other said : I will not.—The first said : Then I will take it and guard it. If I find the owner, I will return it to him.—So he took it and walked on. Presently they heard a man shouting and they asked him what was the matter. He said : I have just dropped a purse of such and such a sort containing dirhems.—The man who had taken it said : Here it is, take it ;—and handed it over to him. Then he said to his companion : If every one followed your system of not guarding people's property for them, their goods would be lost.—The other said : Surely if every one followed my system, the purse would not have been lost, but would have remained in the road where it was, till the owner returned and picked it up.<sup>2</sup>

53. I was told the following by Abu'l-Husain 'Ali b. al-Nazif a philosopher who followed the system of Abu Hashim.<sup>3</sup> I was passing, he said, by the district of Wardan,<sup>4</sup> in the neighbourhood of Sijistan and Makran, which was the residence of the khariji Caliph,<sup>5</sup> this being their country and abode. Arriving at one of their villages, and feeling ill, seeing a field of melons, I bought one and ate it. I felt an attack of fever immediately and slept for the rest of the day and the following night in the melon-field. No-one interfered with me. Before that when I had entered the village I had seen an old tailor in a mosque. I handed him my parcel of clothes, asking him to take care of them for me. He bade me leave them in the niche,<sup>6</sup> and it was after doing so that I had gone into the field. Next morning when I felt better, I returned to the mosque which I found open ; but I did not see the tailor. I found my parcel laid out in the niche. I said to myself : What a fool this tailor must be, to leave my clothes to take care of themselves and go away !—I had no doubt

(1) Apparently the elder Tanukhi held meetings at which points of law were discussed.

(2) The speaker seems to have overlooked the possibility that the owner might fail to see where the purse lay.

(3) For this person's views see *Moslem Schisms and Sects* translated by K. C. Seelye, New York, 1920, p. 190.

(4) The geographers do not mention this place.

(5) These sectarians gave the title to their chief.

(6) Which marks the direction of prayer.

that he had taken them home with him at night, and brought them back to the mosque in the morning expecting me. So I sat down, opened the parcel and began to take out the various articles, and while I was doing this the tailor appeared. I said to him : How came you to leave this parcel exposed ?—He asked me whether I missed anything, and I admitted that I missed nothing. Then said he, about what are you asking ?—I said : I should like to know the truth of this matter.—He said : Last night I left your clothes where they were and went home.—I began to objurgate him, but he only laughed, and said : You have got used to bad ways, having been brought up in infidel lands where people steal and defraud. We here know of no such thing. Had your clothes been left in their place till they decayed, no-one would have taken them but yourself. You might have travelled to the East or to the West, and on your return you would have found them where they had been left. We have no experience of theft or mischief or any of the practices current among you. Possibly in a long series of years something of this sort might befall you, but you would find that it was the work of some stranger who passed by the place, whom we should immediately pursue and without fail overtake ; we should then put him to death on the ground of his infidelity and doing destruction in the land, or amputate his arm from the elbow as is done with thieves here.<sup>1</sup> So you will see nothing of this sort here.—I afterwards, said the narrator, made inquiry about the conduct of the people of this land, and I found that it was as the tailor had stated. They do not lock their doors at night, indeed most of them have no doors, but only curtains to keep away dogs and wild beasts.

54. I was told the following by Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. Ahmad the Doorkeeper, known as Ibn al-Khurasani ; he was door-keeper to Mu'izz al-daulah. One day, he said, I was with Mu'izz al-daulah in the Caliph's palace in the presence of the Caliph al-Muti'.<sup>2</sup> When the parade was over, Mu'izz al-daulah said to me : Tell him<sup>3</sup> that I should like to go round the palace and be shown the gardens and the courts ; would he order someone to show me round ?—I translated this into Arabic to the Caliph, who ordered his eunuch Shahak and his door-keeper Ibn Abi 'Umar to show him round.—The two proceeded to go in front of him

(1) The usual practice is to amputate from the wrist.

(2) 334-363 A.H.

(3) Mu'izz al-daulah spoke Persian, but not Arabic.

while I walked behind, and when we had got away from the Caliph's presence, they stopped and said : Prince, it is improper for you to go round the palace accompanied by more than some two or three attendants ; so choose those whom you wish to accompany you and send away the rest. —So Mu'izz al-daulah took with him his secretary Al-Saimari,<sup>1</sup> and some ten of his door-keepers and retainers, all soldiers.<sup>2</sup> The rest of his retainers and troops he left in the Court of Salutation. I stopped to tighten my belt, while Mu'izz al-daulah went on with Shahak and Ibn Abi 'Umar, not waiting for me. The Prince was walking quickly, and when I had tightened my belt I overtook him, and pulled his coat from behind. When he turned, I said to him in Persian : Do you know where you are ? Why are you proceeding headlong without cognizance of the fact that you are in a palace in which a thousand princes and a thousand viziers have been put to death ?<sup>3</sup> What is your object in going about this palace by yourself ? What guarantee have you that a decade or a score of servants may not be waiting for us in this narrow passage, to kill you ?—As I was speaking to him in Persian, the Caliph's people could not understand. Al-Saimari said to him in Persian : What he says is perfectly true.—The Prince said to us ; If I were to turn back now, they would know that I was afraid, and I should lose their respect ; they would look upon me as a coward. So do you crowd close round me, since a hundred of these people would be no match for us, nor indeed would their master venture on foul play with me.—He then walked on at such a pace that we could not properly take in the objects which we saw. Presently we came to a room in which there was a copper statue of a woman, with some smaller statues of female attendants in front of her. Never had we seen anything more beautiful than these statues, especially that of the woman. Mu'izz al-daulah was entranced and asked about them. He was told that it was a statue called *Occupation*,<sup>4</sup> and had been brought to Muqtadir from some Indian country where it had been worshipped. The Prince of Oman having conquered and become master of

(1) His name was Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ahmad. He appears to have been Mu'izz al-daulah's minister in 334, and died in 339. See Index to *Eclipse*.

(2) This was a liberal interpretation of "two or three".

(3) It would have been more correct to say a score of each.

(4) Arabic *shughal*, but this may stand for some foreign word.

that country had brought the statue away.<sup>1</sup>—Mu'izz al-daulah said: By Allah, I have fallen in love with this statue for its beauty, and in spite of my disapproval of slave-girls, were this statue one, I should give a hundred thousand dinars for it. I have a mind to ask the Caliph to let me have it so that it can be near me and I can constantly see it.—Al-Saimari said to him: You must not do that, as you will be charged with puerility.—So we hurried on with our sight-seeing and getting away, and had no thought for anything, neither felt we our souls our own, till he had rejoined his troops and retainers. When he had got into his barge he turned to al-Saimari, and said to him: Abu Ja'far, my liking for the Caliph has increased, since, had he harboured evil designs against me, and meant any mischief, he could have put me to death to-day as easily as possible.—Al-Saimari said: That is so, and you may well praise God.—When Mu'izz al-daulah had got back to his palace he ordered ten thousand dirhems to be distributed among the descendants of Abu Talib as a thankoffering for his safety. They were distributed but the recipients never learned the reason.<sup>2</sup>

55. I was told the following by Abu Muhammad 'Abdallah b. Dasah who had heard it from Abu'l-Husain Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. al-Muthanna, who had heard it from his father. There was, he said, in Basrah among the Banu Minqar<sup>3</sup> a physician who used to attend the qadi 'Isa b. Abân<sup>4</sup> when he stayed in Basrah, in order to administer draughts of castor oil for successive days in each year. When the treatment was finished the qadi would give him an order on his steward for two hundred dirhems. One year he wrote by mistake two hundred dinars,<sup>5</sup> and when the physician brought the order to the steward the latter felt doubts about it, and said he must wait till he had got permission to honour it.—The steward accordingly went to the qadi and showed him the order.

(1) There is no mention in Miskawaihi's chronicle of any invasion of India by princes of Oman in Muqtadir's time, though a story in vol. i of the *Table-talk* suggests that there was intercourse between Oman and Ceylon. Possibly the Cicerones told Mu'izz al-daulah the first story which it occurred to them to invent.

(2) Mu'izz al-daulah was a Shi'i, and would regard charity towards the family of 'Ali as pleasing to Allah. The anecdote illustrates the hollowness of the attachment of the Caliphs to their masters at this time.

(3) This tribe is mentioned by Tabari as quartered in Basrah in the year 101.

(4) From the mention of him in Guest's *Kindi*, p. 505, II, he would appear to have been a recognized jurist in 200 A.H.

(5) About fifteen times the value.

He said : No, I did not mean this, I meant two hundred dirhems. However, this is a thing which God has caused to pass through my hand, so I will not go back from it. Give him the money.—This was done.

56. The same Abu Muhammad told me the following which he had heard from the perfume-merchant Abu Sahl b. Ziyad.

*Unfit for translation.*

57. He also told me the following, which he had heard from the clerk Abu'l-Faraj Mansur b. al-Qasim al-Qunna'i. When Abu 'Ali b. Muqlah was vizier,<sup>1</sup> the qadi Abu 'Umar paid him a visit. 'Ali b. 'Isa was sitting with the vizier, and the latter bade the qadi take a higher place than 'Ali b. 'Isa. He refused. The vizier bade him take it a second time, but he again refused and took a seat below that of 'Ali b. 'Isa. When the qadi departed, the vizier sent a messenger to the qadi's barge, summoning the qadi's son Abu'l-Husain. When he arrived, the vizier said to him : Say to Abu 'Umar : I did not place you above 'Ali b. 'Isa expecting you to disobey my order, to decline, and take a seat below him.—Abu'l-Husain went back and reported what had occurred. Abu 'Umar bade his son return to the vizier and say : This is a man who was once my chief, and through a turn of fortune is so no more. I disliked the idea of taking a place above him, lest the vizier should regard me as a man who exalted himself above his chiefs. I acted as I did for your sake, and to show respect for chieftainship.—When Abu'l-Husain repeated this to the vizier, the latter said : Say to him : May God reward you well ; from you good sense is to be learned.

58. He also told me the following. We were told, he said, by Abu'l-Husain Muhammad b. 'Ubaidallah b. Nasrawaihi after his authorities, that when Mu'tadid arrested the qadi Isma'il b. Ishaq,<sup>2</sup> and said to him : I am informed that you know Isma'il b. Bulbul to be an atheist what say you concerning his execution ?—The qadi answered : What can I say about a man whose *kunyah* and whose father's name are taken from birds ?—Mu'tadid perceived that he was shuffling and said to the qadi Yusuf :<sup>3</sup> Have you anything to say about him ?—He replied : Yes. I was ordered by Muwaffaq to spend money on the Feast, and he bade Isma'il furnish me with the means. I remained in his chamber demanding the money,

(1) He was vizier three times 318-324.

(2) Qadi of both sides of Baghdad in 262.

(3) Father of the qadi Abu 'Umar.

one day from morning till evening. I never saw him perform a prayer, neither did he leave his place. I kept close to him for a whole series of days, and his practice was the same. I thought that perhaps he discharged his obligations at night. At the close of one day he said to me : Stay with me to-night, that I may give you the money.—He sat talking in my presence until he dozed, and, wishing to treat me respectfully, told me I might sleep in his presence. I did so, but the whole time I never saw him perform a prayer.—Mu'tadid said to him : You may go now, as you have told me what I wanted. He then ordered the execution of Isma'il.

59. I was told the following by the same Abu Muhammad after Abu'l-Hasan b. Abi Nasr after Ibn Abi'l-Walid b. Abi Abdallah b. Abi Dawud. I was told, said the last, by my father that 'Amr b. al-Laith<sup>1</sup> had retainers to guard him all night in the chamber wherein he slept. Waking one night, he found one of these retainers leaning against the wall and sleeping as he stood. 'Amr proceeded to dig his elbow into the man's ear till the man was dead. None of the guards was caught napping in his palace after that.

60. Abu Muhammad also told us the following, which he had heard from Abu'l-Husain Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. al-Muthanna, who had heard it from his father, who had heard it from his uncle, who told it of Ibn 'Ayyash.<sup>2</sup> I was dining, he said, with Humaid al-Tusi,<sup>3</sup> and put my hand on a roast fowl, but felt disinclined for it, as I had eaten enough ; so I broke none of it off. When the meal was over and I had washed my hands, and was leaving, I noticed a light shining in the vestibule, and a man sobbing. He came up to me and said : Fellow, give life to a fellow creature of whose death you are the cause !—I asked him what he meant.—He said : I am Humaid's chef : you touched a fowl, and broke none of it off. Humaid supposed that it had been insufficiently roasted, and has ordered my execution.—I went back to Humaid, and when he saw me he said : It is useless for you to intercede for the chef.—I said : Let the Prince<sup>4</sup> hear what I have to say, and then do as he thinks right.—He bade me speak.—I swore by the most solemn oaths that the fowl was well roasted, and that I had only rejected it because I had no more appetite.

(1) Saffarid ruler of Fars, etc. 265-287 A. H.

(2) It is uncertain which of the persons who bore this name is meant.

(3) General of Ma'mun.

(4) Probably a higher title than the man deserved.

I then proceeded to plead the cause of the chef.—He said : I will condone his offence on your account, but on condition that you never again enter my house. We have no hope of another life, and have only this. We cannot possibly allow any one to render it uncomfortable.

61. He also told me the following, which he had heard from Abu Yahya b. Mukram qadi in Baghdad, who had heard it from his father. There was, he said, in my neighbourhood a shaikh named Abu 'Ubaidah, a cultured man, who related many narratives. He was an intimate associate of Ishaq b. Ibrahim al-Mus'abi.<sup>1</sup> He told me that one night at midnight he was summoned by Ishaq who had sent a number of messengers. I was greatly alarmed, he said, by this, knowing as I did the ferocity of his character and the readiness with which he shed blood. I was afraid he might be resenting something that had happened in our intercourse, or had been told some falsehood about me which had angered him, and made him resolve on putting me to death. So I came out in a state of panic and went to his palace, where I was led from one apartment to another until I was taken into the women's apartment, which increased my despair. I was then brought into a small chamber, on the vestibule of which I heard the suppressed sobbing of a woman. Ishaq was seated on a chair with a drawn sword in front of him. I was at a loss, but saluted and stood still. He said : Sit down, Abu 'Ubaidah;<sup>2</sup> this allayed my fear, and I seated myself. He tossed to me several reports which proved to be letters from the district heads of police, each of them narrating the day's happenings. Most of them reported the arrests of women who were daughters of viziers, chief clerks, generals, and governors, surprised in compromising situations with men. These were all lodged in prison and instructions concerning them solicited.—I said : I have mastered the contents of these documents, and what orders does the governor give me ?—He said : All these women have fathers nobler than myself, and superior in rank and wealth. Nevertheless destiny has brought them to what you see. It has occurred to me that my daughters will come to the same. So I have collected them all, five in number, near this place, with the intention of slaughtering the lot at once, and so escaping the anxiety. What say you to this proposal ?—I said : Governor, the fathers of these girls who are in prison did not look after them properly.

(1) Prefect of Baghdad for Ma'mun.

(2) The respectful address would indicate that no harm was intended.



They left them fortunes<sup>1</sup> and did not protect them by husbands ; so, being left to themselves, they have gone wrong. Had they joined them in wedlock to men of their own rank, they would never have come to this. My proposal is that you should summon a certain officer (whom I named), who has five sons, all of them handsome and well brought up. Marry each of your daughters to one of these and so you will be safe from disgrace and hell-fire.<sup>2</sup>—He said : Abu 'Ubaidah, that is a good idea. Send someone to the officer at once, and get it over.—So I sent to the man, and before it was dawn he presented himself with his sons, and I married the latter to Ishaq's daughters with a single homily.<sup>3</sup> Ishaq had borne in front of each of his daughters five thousand gold dinars, with a quantity of perfume, clothing, horses, mules, and slaves ; while each of the bridegrooms gave me a commission on what he had received, and Ishaq's concubines sent me presents at once with thanks for saving their daughters' lives. So the affair had a happy ending and when I left I had got three thousand gold dinars with a quantity of perfume and clothing.

(1) If the text is right, this implies that their fathers were deceased.

(2) Since infanticide was forbidden by the Prophet, one would fancy that the murder of grown up daughters would also earn this.

(3) As appears from Hariri the homily was a matter of importance on these occasions.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE TABLE-TALK OF A MESOPOTAMIAN JUDGE

### PART II.

*(Continued from our last issue.)*

61. I was told the following by al-Husain b. Muhammad al-Jubba'i, who heard it from Abu'l-Qasim b. 'Amr b. Zaid, cloth-merchant of Shirâz, resident in Baghdâd. I was told, he said, by Abu Hamdun the Messmate<sup>1</sup> after one of his ancestors, who was the source of the information, that Mutawakkil was passionately fond of Indian wood<sup>2</sup> and one night complained to him of the lack of it. I (he said) said to him : Prince of Believers, kings do not disdain to request of other kings presents of rarities to be found in the countries of the latter. If you were to send the king of India a handsome present and request of him some Indian wood, there would be no disgrace therein.—The Caliph said : Then you must be the messenger.—I was unwilling, but he urged me till I assented, wishing indeed that I had not made this suggestion though a sound one, as it involved me in danger of losing my life. I said to myself : I might well have kept silence.—Mutawakkil proceeded to prepare presents, while I got ready for departure, and made my will, as I had little hope of returning. At all events, I thought, I must take with me a good supply of wine, so that if the waves are high I may drink, and get intoxicated so as not to know if I drown, or feel the force of the waves. So I took with me a good supply of wine of Qutrabull, fine grapes, and Syrian apples, some of which I preserved in honey. My voyage lasted some months, and I faced terrible dangers, but at last I reached the Indian coast. I then obtained a mount and travelled from town to town till I reached Lahore, which is the capital of the most important of the Indian kings, whose name is—. I arrived at the city with the escort which he had sent, was

(1) Not, it would seem, the celebrated Ibn Hamdun,

(2) Probably sandalwood is meant,

met, treated with honour, given servants, and housed in a fine residence. The king then held a public audience, to which I was introduced. He was there with his court, his insignia, his troops and his subjects, and was seated on his throne, clad in two garments of Chinese silk, one round his loins, the other round his shoulders. On his neck was a ribbon of the same material supporting a bag, whose contents I did not know. Addressing me through an interpreter he said : The king asks thee why thou hast come ?—I replied : The Prince of Believers would establish relations of friendship and affection between himself and his majesty, and has sent certain gifts through me.—I asked for his orders to present them.—The interpreter returned a civil and kindly answer in his name, ordering the presents to be accepted. So I went away with his messengers, and he received the gifts. I repeatedly attended his public audiences. After some days he summoned me at noon on a hot day. Entering the public audience room in which I was accustomed to visit him I found scarcely any one there ; I was taken from place to place, and finally was brought to a private chamber tastefully built and splendidly furnished like one of the chambers in the Caliph's palace, wherein he was seated on an exquisite divan of Tabaristan.<sup>1</sup> He was clad in an embroidered shirt of delicate texture and drawers of Dabiqi,<sup>2</sup> of Baghdad cut ; and his cushion was covered with a magnificent piece of embroidery. In front of him were gold and silver vessels and numerous vases of Iraq workmanship all handsome and filled with camphor ; rose-water, ambergris, and *nadd*,<sup>3</sup> and statuettes.<sup>4</sup> When I entered he addressed me in perfectly fluent Arabic, and asked how I liked his uncomfortable country.—I thanked him for his kindness, eulogized his land, and assured him that I was living in luxury owing to his forethought and bounty.—He talked to me long in friendly fashion, and he found pleasure in my conversation. We touched on numerous topics, and ultimately he conversed without restraint. Taking him altogether I concluded that he was a polished native of Iraq. Presently he offered me some amber-coloured wine in a china cup saying : Drink this and tell me whether you have anything like it at home.—Kissing

(1) For the textiles of Tabaristan see the references in de Goeje's Glossary to vol. iv of his *Bibliotheca Geographorum*.

(2) An Egyptian fabric.

(3) A mixed perfume.

(4) Probably of some scented material.

his hand I took the cup and drank. It is, I said, as excellent as could be.—He said : Tell me truly whether you have the like at home. I proceeded to describe the wine of Qutrabull, its uses, virtues, and bouquet, and when I dilated on these I noticed some expression of scepticism in his eye. I said to him : I took with me a supply of this wine for my voyage, and there is some left over, which I should like no one but your majesty to taste. If your majesty will order it to be brought in with the view of testing the truth of my statement, I will see that this is done.—He said : Do so.—I told my slave to bring all that remained to us of the wine. He produced a few jars, and I told him to fetch some of the Syrian apples. He brought a number of those which had been steeped in honey, of which he wiped the honey, though a considerable amount of it still remained on them. When the jars were set in front of the king I ordered my slave to decant some of the wine into a cup, which, after I had drunk from it first myself, was handed to his majesty. He approved of it, and then took an apple. When he saw its colour, he beheld something the like of which was not in his land, and when he smelt it, he almost sighed with admiration. He then proceeded to eat part of an apple, which I had broken and of which I had eaten one half while he was drinking, leaving the other half in front of him. This he now ate. He then wiped his mouth and said to me : I had no idea that the world contained such wine or such apples as these. I was indeed sceptical about what you told me, but now from my personal experience I admit that you told the truth, and feel the highest respect for a land wherein such things are to be found in profusion. Had I not had personal experience, I should not have believed it. Then he said to me : Good gracious, do you people drink such wine and eat such fruit and after all die ?\* That is extraordinary !—

After this he invited me everyday to that chamber, where I would eat with him and drink, and he would tell me anecdotes. When I felt sufficiently intimate, I said to him : Would your majesty permit me to ask a question ?—He bade me do so.—I said : God Almighty has conferred on you a number of favours. You are seated in a chamber indistinguishable from a part of the Caliph's palace in Iraq. Further He has given you such wisdom and understanding and such familiarity with the Arabic language that you might be a citizen of Baghdad. Whence have you this ?—

---

\* Nectar and ambrosia preserved the gods alive.

He said : My friend, my father was of the royal family, his father was put to death and his kingdom seized by one of his captains who had rebelled. This usurper was not of the royal house, so my father fled to Oman in fear for his life. He came to Oman incognito, and wandered from country to country till he arrived in Baghdad in the guise of a trader, accompanied by a servant who concealed his secret. He travelled all over Iraq, being supplied with means from here. He stayed in Iraq some years, where he learned to speak Arabic correctly, made friends of some of the inhabitants, married among them and mixed freely with them. After many years the rebel died, who had put his father to death and seized his kingdom, and the people of this country, acknowledging my father's right, communicated the facts to him, and summoned him, supplying him with funds. Taking with him some Iraqis of scholarly attainments and social gifts, and skill in crafts, he arrived and assumed the sovereignty. He made it his object to attract people from Iraq, and was so munificent towards them that they came in great numbers, built him this chamber, and provided him with these implements. For audiences to his subjects he would adopt their own style lest it should be noised abroad that his mode was different from theirs, which might lead to his being thought inferior to other sovereigns, and bring him into contempt. But when he was in private he would sit in the style which you see. When I was born, he put me in charge of both Iraqi and Indian tutors, who spoke to me in their respective languages, so that I grew up speaking both. My training however was chiefly done by Iraqis. When my father died, the kingdom was given to me and I have followed my father's practice of adopting the style of the country for public audiences, but this other when I am alone and in private.—I then asked him : What is there in the bag which you hang on your neck ?—He said : One of the bones of the man who instituted the worship of Buddha and gave them this code. He lived so many thousand years ago (he put it at ten thousand years). When this man died, he said, he ordained in his will that he should be put into coffin after coffin so many thousand years, and whenever any of his bones decays they preserve the remainder, removing the decayed bones lest the corruption should spread to such as are yet sound. Ultimately only this one bone remained, and this they put into a golden case and the case into a bag, which the kings carry on a string suspended from their necks out of reverence for it, for good luck, as a decoration to themselves, and to preserve

---

it from decay. It has hung from the neck of ever so many kings during their reigns for ever so many years (he mentioned a vast number). So with us it has obtained the place of your Master's *burdah*, which is worn by your Caliphs.<sup>1</sup>

When my stay had been wearisomely protracted, I asked permission to be dismissed, and telling him how much the Caliph admired the Indian wood, asked for a copious supply of it. He prefers it, I said, to anything else which you could give him. The King accordingly sent an enormous quantity of this wood, and besides an unparalleled store of curiosities. Further there were sent with me precious stones such as ruby and calamine and various rare products of his country, whose value was very great, many times that of the presents which we had brought. When I wished to bid him farewell he bade me wait, and ordered a box to be brought, which he opened with a golden key, taking out some bits of Indian wood with which he presented me, to the amount of half a *ratl*. He then called for a casket, into which he put the wood. Having locked it he handed it with its key to me, saying : This is something special, which you are to deliver with your own hand into his.—I thought this strange, and said to myself : This gift will certainly look silly.—Noticing the disapproval in the expression of my face, he said : I fancy you despise this gift.—I asked : What is it, that you should give me such instructions about it ? Perhaps the king will explain.—He bade a slave bring a censer and fire. When these were produced he called for a fine handkerchief, and when this was brought he took out a splinter of the wood less in size than a silver *danak*,<sup>2</sup> which he then cast on the fire, and with which he then perfumed the handkerchief. He then said to me : Smell.—I did so, and the odour was unknown to me, resembling neither *nadd* nor sandal, nor any other scent which we use in fumigation. Never had I smelt the like. So I said : This wood certainly deserves the instruction which the king has given me about it.—He said : Wait, and I will show you something even more marvellous than what you have seen.—He proceeded to call for a basin and water, and when they were brought ordered the handkerchief to be washed with soap. This was done in front of him, and he then ordered the handkerchief to be dried in the sun, and then brought to him.

(1) This story would appear to be very largely romance.

(2) One sixth of a dirhem, which would be about the size of a Swiss Franc.

When this had been done, he bade me smell it. I did so, and found the odour absolutely unchanged and undiminished. He then had the washing with soap and the drying repeated a number of times, about ten, until at last the odour was removed. I was amazed at this, and he said: Know now the value of what you have, and learn that in the stores of all the kings of India there is not one *ratl* of this wood in addition to what I have given you. So inform your master of its value.—

I now bade him farewell, and departed; God gave me a safe voyage and I presented myself to Mutawakkil, who was pleased at my arrival. He treated me with honour and I delivered the presents which he received favourably. I repeated to him most of my conversation with the king, coming finally to the account of the half *ratl* of wood, which I produced and handed to him, without telling him the story of the kerchief. He thought the man a fool as I had done. I then repeated the explanation, produced the censer, the fire, and the kerchief, and did as the king had done. Mutawakkil was amazed in the highest degree and delighted with the result.—This half *ratl*, he said, is worth the whole of your journey.

Al-Husain added: Abu Hamdun Zaid said to me: I was sceptical about this wood,\* until I was told about it by a trustworthy trader, well-known to have visited India repeatedly, whose description tallied exactly with the other. I asked him whether he had heard why this wood was so rare.—He replied: I asked them the reason, and they answered that it grew only in one place on a mountain-height, separated from us by difficult and dangerous country infested with wild beasts. The kings put themselves to vast expense for days, months, and even years, to enable their agents to reach the mountain, where they climb as far as they can, reaching a place where there is no path or means of progress. There they see bucks like our mountain bucks feeding at a distance among the trees. It sometimes happens that they see one of these animals on the crest having in his mouth a piece of that wood which he is chewing. They shoot arrows at him, and if an arrow happen to hit him, and the buck, enraged by the arrow, falls into their hands, having the wood in his mouth, they take it from him; otherwise there is no possibility of obtaining any. So only once in a long series of years do they succeed in obtaining this little bit, and

---

\* The narrator of the experience was an ancestor of this person, not himself.

that after much trouble and the exercise of vigilance. That is why it is so rare.

62. I was told by Abu Ali 'Abdallah b. al-Hajjaj and Abu Bishr the Christian Clerk that someone lampooned the former vizier Abu'l-Fadl al-Shirazi<sup>1</sup> in the following lines :

To grow a beard beneath the chin  
Is no sure means fair fame to win.  
That mule's tail is no glorious thing,  
Whereby you wealth are compassing.  
I could not count the men I've seen  
Whose beards are thick and brains are thin.<sup>2</sup>

63. I was told the following by Abu Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Tabari, Witness. We were told, he said, by al-Husain b.—the Christian Clerk, nicknamed<sup>3</sup>—that Ibn al-Furaṭ once said to him : Kingcraft is legerdemain, which becomes statesmanship when it is carried to perfection.

He also narrated as follows. We were told, he said, by the qadi of qadis (Muhammad b. Ma'rûf) how he had once been with Muti<sup>4</sup> in his barge. We were afloat, and I was standing in front of him with his chamberlain. As each group of men invoked a blessing on him, he asked me who they were, and I told him. Presently a group of Tâlibis<sup>5</sup> saluted, and he asked who they were. I replied : The Tâlibis.—He turned away and hung his head frowning till he had got past them. Then he called me, and when I had signified that I was attending, he said : The descendants of 'Ali are my own family, and the nearest of mankind to me. I love them, but I am aware that they hate me. A man of my rank does not deceive people, so that I can only treat them in the way you saw.

I also heard him say : I hear the Sufi Ja'far al-Khuldi<sup>6</sup> say : If the Sufis would allow me, I could bring you an endless chain of authorities.<sup>7</sup> I went to 'Abbas al-Duri<sup>8</sup> when I was a young man, and took down a lecture of his.

(1) His name was 'Abbas b. al-Husain, and he was vizier in 357 and again in 359. For his career see Index to the *Eclipse*.

(2) A long beard was associated with stupidity, *Irshad* vi. 412 ; some however regarded it as a proof of virtue, *Uqala al-Majanin*, 99.

(3) Too obscene for translation.

(4) Caliph 334-363.

(5) Descendants of 'Ali b. Abi Talib.

(6) An ascetic to whom many sayings are ascribed in the *Luma'* edited by Nicholson.

(7) This seems to be the sense, but the expression in the text is unusual.

(8) Traditionalist, 185-271 A.H.



I was met by one of my Sûfî associates, who asked me what I had got with me. When I showed it him he said : Good gracious, are you abandoning the learning of the cloaks<sup>1</sup> to take up that of the books ?—His words sank into my mind, and I did not go again to 'Abbâs.

I also heard him say : I heard the Sûfî Junaid<sup>2</sup> say : I heard the Sûfî Sari al-Šaqatî<sup>3</sup> say : I know some persons who regard equalization as stinginess, but it is rather preference which should be so regarded.<sup>4</sup>

I also heard him report the following as said by Ja'far al-Khuldi. We were in Junaid's circle when a beggar stopped by it and begged of him. Junaid refused him, saying : My friend, our trade is the same, only we are the subtler.<sup>5</sup> Go away, and may God enrich you. So the man departed.

I also heard from him the following, which he had heard from Ja'far al-Khuldi. I have made the pilgrimage, he said, fifty-six times, twenty times according to the system—meaning "in reliance", *i.e.* without provision or mount.

I also heard him repeat the following from Ja'far al-Khuldi. If any one wishes, he said, to keep his desire a secret, let him do as Ruaim<sup>6</sup> did. He concealed his love of the world for forty years.—How so ?—he was asked. He replied : He practised Sufism for forty years, at the end of which time the qadi Isma'îl b. Ishâq<sup>7</sup> was appointed qâdi of Baghdad. There was warm friendship between these two, so the qadi pressed Ruaim into his service and gave him charge of his door. So Ruaim abandoned Sufism, the Sûfis, and "reliance", attired himself in poplin, embroidery, Dabiqi fabrics and fabrics of Merv, rode asses and mules, had dainty food, and built palaces. So you see he concealed his desire for the world when he could not gratify it, but when he was able to, he revealed the ambition which he had kept secret.

(1) The garment worn by the Sufis.

(2) One of the most famous ascetics, b. 298 A.H.

(3) Ob. 251 or 257.

(4) Equalization means regarding others as to be helped or protected equally with oneself : Preference means regarding their claims as greater than one's own. See the account of this matter in Nicholson's *Kashf al-Mahjub*, p. 190. The sense of the proposition is probably that such preference is at the expense of the other's virtue.

(5) This sounds more like the comment of some cynic on the practice of the ascetic.

(6) See Nicholson's *Kashf al-Mahjub*, where, however, this person's fall from grace is explained away.

(7) In 262 A.H.

I also heard him say that he had heard the Sûfî Abu'l-Qasim al-Zayyat record how he had heard Junaid relate as follows. Sari al-Saqati, he said, told us that the innocent man is bold, the treacherous timid, and the guilty alarmed.

64. I was told the following by Abu 'Amr al-Qâsim b. Ja'far b. Abd al-Wahid al-Hâshimi, the Qadi. We were told, he said, by Abu'l Qasim al-Bazzaz that he had heard one of the associates of Sahl b. 'Abdallah al-Tustari<sup>1</sup> say : Sahl said to me : The ignorant man is dead, the offender intoxicated, and the obstinate ruined.

A popular proverb is : Let health abound, speech will be sound. Another proverb of similar import is *si urina tua bene se habet, feri ea vultum medici, i.e.,* If you are in good health, you need not mind what you do.<sup>2</sup> A felicitous rhyme of the same import is :—

If when you do mischief you feel in a fright,  
Your ease to recover, you best had do right.<sup>3</sup>

65. I heard Abu Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Ahmad al-Tabarî say how he had heard Ja'far al-Khuldi narrate how he had heard Junaid state that he had heard Sari al-Saqati say : Men become friends in their transactions, but this comes about only through good behaviour before God.<sup>4</sup>

He also told me that Abu'l-Husain b. Nasrawaihi frequently consulted him about some affair that was going on. I was surprised, he said, at his doing so, and would say to him : Do you, with your age, experience, training, practice, and discipline,<sup>5</sup> consult me, your child ? This is a proceeding on your part which alarms me, as it seems as though you were poking fun at me.—He would reply : God has raised you above that. Your supposition might be true if I let you contradict me, but did not contradict you, or let you argue against me, but did not argue against you, so as to arrive at a result according to which I should act. But since you see me do this,<sup>6</sup> you have no ground for suspicion. I, in fact, try to think of myself as a young man, whose knowledge is of no account.

(1) Famous ascetic, ob. 283 A.H.

(2) This gloss is clearly wrong. The meaning is : If you are in good health, you need not trouble about physicians.

(3) Here too the author is mistaken about the import.

(4) The sense seems to be : by acting in a way which will be observant of decorum before the Deity.

(5) Ibn Nasrawaihi was a qadi.

(6) *i.e.,* argue with you.

66. He also told me that he had heard Abu'l-Husain b. Nasrawaihi narrate as follows. When Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi<sup>1</sup> was secretary to Mu'izz al-daulah, he came to Basrah and arrested the qâdi Abu'l-Qâsim Ja'far b. 'Abd al-Wahîd al-Hashimi, in order to disgrace him, and in order to gratify Abu Tammam al-Zainabi al-Hashimi, who was related to Muhallabi by marriage and was an enemy of Ja'far.<sup>2</sup> There was no special enmity between Ja'far and al-Muhallabi himself. Presently Abu Tammam paid an official visit to al-Muhallabi. When he departed, the latter bade his slaves see how far he went. They returned to report that he had gone out of the vestibule and left the house. Al-Muhallabi exclaimed: Here am I, putting a man like Ibn 'Abd al-Wahid into confinement solely on Abu Tammam's account. He pays me a visit in the house wherein Ibn 'Abd al-Wahid is in custody, and has not the generosity to go and see him, offer his services, go bail for him, and petition me on his account, so as to be the cause of his deliverance, and secure his attachment! Rise up, Abu'l-Husain and lead Ibn 'Abd al-Wahid to his house, as I release him.—So (said Abu'l-Husain) I went to the room where Ibn 'Abd al-Wahid was imprisoned, told him what had occurred, brought him to al-Muhallabi, whom he thanked before going to his home.

67. He also told me the following which he had heard from Abu'l-Husain b. Nasrawaihi. I was present, he said, in the chamber of al-Muhallabi, when there entered Ja'far b. 'Abd al-Wahid. Al-Muhallabi received him with a frown, and treated him with disrespect. He sat down and produced from his pocket a petition. I observed the repugnance and disapproval on al-Muhallabi's countenance; however he read the document and signed it. Ja'far proceeded to present a whole series of documents, and as al-Muhallabi signed them, his face assumed a more friendly mien towards Ja'far. When the lot were completed, Ja'far rose. Abu Tammam al-Zainabi now entered, and was treated with profound respect by al-Muhallabi, who beamed upon him. Abu Tammam produced a petition and presented it to al-Muhallabi, who signed it. He then produced a whole number of petitions and each time one was produced and signed, disapproval and repugnance appeared on al-Muhallabi's countenance. Finally he finished the lot, and Abu Tammam took them and rose. Al-Muhallabi then addressed me and said:

(1) Famous vizier, for whose career see Index to the *Eclipse*.

(2) Further references to this person will be found in the Index to vol. of the *Table-Talk*.

Abu'l-Husain, there is a vast difference between these two men. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahid came in, and it was my intention to drive him away by the disrespect and coldness with which I treated him. I had made up my mind before reading the first petition which he presented to refuse it; but when I perused it, I found that it was on behalf of someone other than himself, and I did not like the idea of his being more generous than myself, seeing that he was sacrificing his dignity for the sake of someone who had asked him to petition me, well knowing what my feelings towards him were; still this did not prevent him from giving away his dignity for the benefit of the suppliant. Were I to stint what it was in my power to bestow, he would be more generous than I. As I loathed this idea I signed. Then followed a series of petitions, and I found that they were all on behalf of people no one of whom had any connexion with him. So I signed them all, and indeed willingly, as my opinion of the man had risen, and I thought it improper to refuse. Then there entered this other, whom I treated with the respect which you saw owing to our relationship, and when he presented his petitions, I found that they were all for personal favours. I signed them; each time he presented one I kept hoping that it might be on behalf of someone else, so that when I signed it on his account I might thereby be winning him some credit; but I found, in fact, that they were all for things which concerned himself. I disapproved of his conduct, and my opinion of him was lowered; still owing to our relationship I did not think proper to refuse, and signed. Yet how is it possible for me to promote a man who acts in this way, and degrade one who acts in the other style?

68. I heard Abu Ishaq<sup>1</sup> say that he had heard Ja'far al-Khuldi state that he had heard Junaid report that he had heard Sari al-Saqati say: The dainty part of Nearness (to God) is Absence (from all mundane thoughts).

I also heard him quote the following saying of Sari al-Saqati as reported by the same authorities. For thirty years, he said, I have been harbouring a desire which I have been unable to gratify. Asked what it was, he replied: I should like to eat some food for which neither God Almighty nor any creature could feel resentment against me, and I have found none such.<sup>2</sup>

(1) See § 65.

(2) It may be supposed that this saint thought some other person might have a prior claim.

69. I heard Abu Ishaq say that he had heard the following from one of the older Witnesses at the capital. I was in the presence of the qadi Abu 'Umar with a number of Witnesses whom he employed and deputies of his with whom he was on familiar terms. He showed us a garment of Yemen make, valued at fifty dinars. It was admired by all who were present in the room. The qadi bade his slave summon the cap-maker, and when he came ordered him to cut up the whole piece of stuff into caps, and bring one to each of his friends who were there. He then turned to us and said : You have all admired it ; had one of you done so, I should have presented it to him. Since you are all partners in admiration, I can find no expedient but to present each one of you with a portion of it.

70. I was told by Abu'l-Husain Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Shand al-Wasiti that Abu Qurrah al-Husain b. Muhammad al-Anani the clerk had been in the service of Abu 'Ali Kattab (?) b. al-'Abbas the Dailemite known as al-Kausaj (man with thin hair) owing to a written recommendation of the vizier Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi. After a time the clerk took fright and went into hiding for two or three days ; Abu 'Ali sent him a message with a promise of immunity, and he came out again. After his reappearance Abu Qurrah wrote to al-Muhallabi telling his story and the reason for his hiding lest a garbled account of the matter should reach him from Abu 'Ali. Al-Muhallabi wrote with his own hand on the back of the letter : I have read this, and God has favoured you even as He has guided you aright. You may be at ease, as I am your helper ready to back you, if God will.

71. He also told me the following. On one of the occasions when al-Muhallabi during his vizierate went down to Basrah he spent the summer there, and took a vast crop, worth ten thousand dinars, belonging to my father, which he found there, also crops belonging to traders which had come down from Dastamisan<sup>1</sup> and Wasit, and others belonging to numerous persons. These he proceeded to sell, employing the proceeds as imperial revenue. My father was advised to go to Sabuktakin the Chamberlain<sup>2</sup> and ask him to inform Mu'izz al-daulah of what had been done, so that he might order restitution to be made. My father instead of taking this advice went to al-Muhallabi, who was at 'Ubullah. When (he said) I came into the vizier's presence, he greeted me

(1) District between Wasit, Basrah and Ahwaz (Yâqût).

(2) For his career see Index to the *Eclipses*.

effusively, and asked me why I had come. I replied : I was informed that the vizier (God aid him) had taken some crops belonging to me which he found in Basrah, and I was delighted to hear it, as I supposed that this was an honour conferred on me personally, he having made free with my property as he would with his own or that of his intimate associates when he required it. I felt flattered by this until I was told that in addition to my property he had taken that of certain traders, owners of estates, and humble folk of Dastamisan and Wasit. This alarmed me, for I took the view that if this had been a friendly act, the vizier would have confined it to me, and would not have associated with me therein this class of people, with whom one of his rank could not be on such intimate terms that he could solicit a loan or other help from them. No, he could only fine such people. I feared then from his associating me with this class that his good opinion of me must have altered, and I have come with the view of regaining his approval and otherwise putting myself under his orders.—My words pleased him very much, and he said to me : ‘Ali,<sup>1</sup> by heaven, you are a lucky man ! (This he repeated several times). A moment before your arrival a man came to tell me that you had gone to Sabuktakin the Chamberlain to complain of me, and I meant all sorts of mischief for you ; it was my intention to defend my action, and to employ all possible arguments for that purpose. While I was reflecting on this you were announced. You came in, and bewitched me. By Allah I will not leave this place before I have restored to you your property or most of it, with sound security for the rest.—Seizing his inkhorn he wrote out a list of the sources whence immediate payment could be drawn, and when he had finished this he ordered certain letters to be written giving me an order for the remainder on Shabashi al-Khwarizmi, client of Mu‘izz al-daulah, farmer of the revenue of Basrah. I obtained payment in a short time and went off to Wasit.

72. I was told the following by Abu Bakr b. Ja‘far al-Sawwaq a trader in the part of Baghdad called Karkh, famous for his wealth, good character, and knowing the Qur‘ân by heart. Indeed he was one of their leading men. I had, he said, promised a cash payment to the banker Ibn ‘Abdan (a wealthy man and leading banker in ‘Aun Street,<sup>2</sup> who is still alive), but owing to stress of

(1) It would appear from the heading that the man’s name was Muhammad.

(2) The Lombard Street of Baghdad, see Index to the *Eclipse*.

circumstances delayed it. This was not my practice in my dealings with him. He came to demand payment and in the course of his talk said : I am saying to you, Abû Bakr, as Allah says : *And hard is a custom uprooted*.—Good heavens, I said, Allah the Almighty has not said that.<sup>1</sup>—The banker was discomfited, rose up, and did not return to me for some days. When the money was in my possession, I sent it to him.

There was with us in Basrah a respectable trader called Abu'Ali b. Sa'dan, a wealthy salesman in the Melon-house, who rode (a horse ?) and freely took part in lectures and discussions. I was told by Abu Talhah al-Azdi, a respected shaikh, associate of the Banu'l-Muthanna,<sup>2</sup> that he had seen this man once when they were sitting in the vestibule of the qadi Ja'far b. 'Abd al-Wahid, waiting for admission to him. The time for the afternoon prayer arrived, and, he said, each one of us rose to perform it. Ibn Sa'dan did the like, but his performance was the most stupid that I have ever seen. I said to him : Abu 'Ali, this performance of yours is not *Salat*, you ought to perform it properly. Your performance is like that described by Ibn al-Mu'tazz.<sup>3</sup>

Among those who worship you pray with a click  
Like creature that gulps when expected to lick.

He replied : Abu Talhah, this is a refinement with which we are not acquainted ; we perform our prayer in the style of traders.—I said to him : This is still more extraordinary. Has God then ordained a form of prayer for traders which is different from the style prescribed to the rest of mankind?

The conclusion of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's ode is well known. His comrade al-Numairi had in his presence, after praying in an irregular manner, prostrated himself for a long time. Ibn al-Mu'tazz improvised the verse that has been quoted, after which there follows :

Then in your prostration, so long does it last,  
A hungry wayfarer would end his repast.

73. I was told the following by Muhammad b. 'Adi b. Zahr of Basrah, our neighbour there. I saw, he said, Abu Ishaq Yasin, a man who used to live near the public

(1) This banker was apparently a Muslim. Ordinarily the business was in the hands of Jews. Stories of misquotation of the Qur'an are fairly common ; see the *Ghurur al-Khasa'is* of Watwat, 1284, p. 228.

(2) Probably descendants of al-Muthanna l' Harithah, an early Islamic general.

(3) The pretender whose brief tenure of the Caliphate is recorded by Miskawaihi at the commencement of the *Eclipse*. He was also a poet and collector of anecdotes.

mosque in Basrah, and towards the end of his life repeated traditions, arguing with a man in the mosque; the latter said to him: The Prophet said: Whoso has been good one day to his Lord, time shall effect no change in him.<sup>1</sup>

74. I was told the following by my father. My first official appointment, he said, was that of qadi in 'Askar Mukram, Tustar, Jundaisabur, Sûs, and their dependencies, having been appointed by the qadi Abu Ja'far Ahmad b. Ishâq b. al-Buhlûl. I was then in my thirty-third year, as this took place in the year 311, and I was born in Dhu'l-Hijjah of the year 278. When Abu Ja'far handed me the deed of investiture, he charged me to fear God, and gave me various instructions with regard to the affairs of my office, and management of both worldly and spiritual concerns; further, his own stipend which he drew from the governor there, on whom it was a charge. After bidding him farewell I rose to depart, when he bade me be seated; for, he said, I have forgotten something of importance.—When I was seated, he proceeded: You are a young man, of excellent character, and copious learning, and are going to people who are malicious, and will be jealous of your eminence, and on the look out for your failings, if your judgment goes against them with justice. They will find no way to detract from you except by attributing to you youth and want of experience, and you may be certain that they will do this. If you tell the truth, they will have ascertained what they want, whereas lying will not pass. So you must not tell them your real age, but when you are asked about it, say: Under forty years. For were you twenty or less, you would still be speaking the truth in taking refuge and shelter in forty. For that is "maturity"<sup>2</sup> and the limit of middle age and experience. If you are afflicted with someone who will not stop, but asks you: How much under forty?—say: I do not remember, and persist in declining information, so that the conversation may come to an end, and the questioner may suppose that you have forgotten your actual age.

I went off, and it occurred that a single hair in my beard turned white during the journey, and when I entered Ahwaz I took pains to bring it forward with the comb to where it would attract notice, as I took pride in it. I was met by Muhammad b. Ja'far b. Ma'dan the Witness, who was deputed by Abu Ja'far to look after pious foundations, to whom he had written, bidding him meet me and treat

(1) This seems to be the sense, but the construction is unusual.

(2) Sûrah xlvii, 14.



me with respect. He came to the river-bank, bringing me a mount, which I rode to the dwelling that had been secured for me, and he paid me a visit everyday. When I wanted to depart to my province, he said to me : I am overcome by the admirable qualities of the qadi (God support him ! ) ; what is his age ?—Remembering the advice of Abu Ja'far, I replied : Under forty.—How much under ?—he asked.—I said : I do not remember.—He did not doubt that I had forgotten the actual year. So he left me alone. This<sup>1</sup> is the contrary of what we witness in these days ; I have seen in Baghdad two qadis, of the Hashimite family, public preachers, accredited Witnesses,<sup>2</sup> one of them more distinguished and noble than the other, a man who held high offices, whereas the other had been given high offices by the Caliph,<sup>3</sup> and had thought himself worthy to be qadi of qadis, and had indeed canvassed for that office, though unsuccessfully—both of whom dyed their beards openly with black dye. One of them indeed gave up the practice some years before his death, he being the less exalted of the two, whereas the other who is still alive keeps on dyeing his beard.—We pray God for kindly concealment ;<sup>4</sup> for though there are traditions in favour of dyeing the hair, still it is only excusable in soldiers, clerks, and persons who do not aspire to be judges or witnesses. Aspirants to these offices have no excuse.<sup>5</sup>

75. I was told the following by the jurist Abu'l-Qâsim 'Abd al-Rahîm b. Ja'far al-Sirafi, known as Ibn al-Sammak. I was, he said, in the presence of Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ali b. Shahawaihi, qadi in Arrajan. There appeared before him two persons, one of whom claimed a thousand dirhems of the other ; the qadi asked the defendant about it and he denied the claim. He then asked the plaintiff whether he had any evidence.—He said, No; but make him swear.<sup>6</sup> The qâdi then asked the defendant whether he would swear.—He said : The plaintiff brought me before your predecessor in the office of qadi, and he took from me an oath about these dirhems.—The qâdi then said to the plaintiff : What do you say to this ?—He said, Yes, he did

(1) *i.e.* a qâdi trying to look old.

(2) One usually supposes that a Judge would be higher than a Witness in rank.

(3) What is suggested is that his appointments would be less important than those made by the Prince of Princes.

(4) Apparently of our advancing age.

(5) For clearly such dyeing involves the falsification of evidence.

(6) By the rule of 'Umar the plaintiff should produce evidence, whereas an oath may be demanded of the defendant,

swear, but falsely.—The qâdi thereupon bade him be off, as he had no claim against the defendant.—

Turning then to me and to Abu'l-Wa'd, a jurist of our school (*i.e.*, that of Abu Hanîfah) and a number of jurists who were seated there, all of them Hanefites, he said : Tell me, supposing this claimant of a thousand were to assert that the defendant had offered to swear, but that he, the plaintiff, had not accepted the offer, that then we had wished to take the defendant's oath, and the defendant had asserted that he had already sworn to the effect required, and each of the parties adhered to his statement, how could we settle the dispute between them ?—We all of us reflected for a long time, after which there was a discussion which led to no certain result, nor were we clear about the opinion which we should give. So I said to him : Perhaps the qâdi will be good enough to give us his view.—He said : We were told by the qâdi Abû Tâhir al-Dabbâs that the qâdi Abû Hazim, having to deal with this very question, advised the magistrate to take in the first place the oath of the person from whom the thousand was claimed to the effect that the plaintiff had not previously caused him to swear about the same matter before another magistrate.

76. One of the retainers of Abu'l-Hasan al-Karkhi was asked for evidence that palm-wine made with St. John's wort,<sup>1</sup> and exceedingly intoxicating, is a lawful beverage. He said : I have found that when God Almighty promised us paradise and described it to us, He made lawful for us in this world things of the same class as those which He promised us in paradise. He permitted us to enjoy<sup>2</sup> them, that we might know thereby the superiority of what He has promised us in paradise, the permanence of that, and the transitoriness of this. Having then promised us wine in paradise, and forbidden it in this world, forasmuch as there was no means of knowing its excellence, so as to encourage us to the works which would cause us to enter paradise and drink it there, it was necessary that He should make lawful for us in this world something of the same kind like this, whereby we might infer its deliciousness. And palm-wine was chosen for this purpose.

Being asked something like this on another occasion he said : God Almighty has created gilliflowers other than of the yellow species ; God creates nothing which is

(1) The seeds of this plant were ground and put into the date-wine. Dozy gives references for this.

(2) The word in the text is unintelligible.

useless, and the species other than the yellow have no use except to flavour palm-wine.<sup>1</sup>

He used to produce this as a serious argument with people whom he regarded as weak, and as a jest with people of learning.

Traditionalists assert that there is no genuine tradition of the Prophet either permitting palm-wine or forbidding it. Abu 'Ali Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhâb al-Jubba'i in a famous inquiry which he dictated, on the lawfulness of palm-wine, took the view that things are naturally to be regarded as lawful, until it is established that they are forbidden. Since the reason does not suggest that it is unlawful, and the plea for making it lawful has not been refuted, it follows that it is as by nature lawful. He proceeded to support this by other arguments which he adduced, and by traversing the arguments of those who made it unlawful and proving them to be fallacious. He then brought up other against himself, whence he extricated himself in a manner which it would take long to narrate, and which would be outside our present scope.

77. I was present in the chamber of Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi after a riot had taken place in Baghdad during his vizierate. The disturbance was serious, and he had arrested a number of bandits and knife-men,<sup>2</sup> put them into covered boats, and sent them down to Bairudh,<sup>3</sup> where he imprisoned them. The rioters made light of this affair, and waxed bold, while the story-tellers in the mosques<sup>4</sup> and the leaders of the Sufis declaimed. The vizier, fearing a recrudescence of the riots, arrested and imprisoned a number of them, and summoned a meeting of Abu al-Sa'ib, qadi of qadis at the time, and a number of qadis, Witnesses, and jurists, one of them being myself, to examine them, with police officials to secure us against violence should the case go against them. It happened that the first person to be examined was a leading Sufi known as Abu Ishaq b. Tha'it, who lived at the Damascus Gate, one of the *rabbani* in the opinion of his followers.<sup>5</sup> The vizier said to him : I am told that in your prayer you

(1) Ibn al-Baitar mentions the yellow variety as the only variety which is of use in medicine. He says nothing about the use of the other varieties.

(2) On the analogy of "gun-men".

(3) Region between Ahwaz and al-Tib (Yaqt).

(4) There is an account of their activities in the work of Mez, translated by Mr. Khuda Bukhsh in this magazine.

(5) In Surah iii, 73 there is the precept *Be rabbani* "divine": with the Sufis it was used to indicate a high degree of spiritual attainment, see *Kashf al-Mahjub* transl. Nicholson, p. 33.

say *O my One in reality, O my contiguous neighbour*, and who does not know that it is not permissible to apply to God the epithet contiguous in reality, and whoever applies this epithet to God is an infidel, since contiguity is an epithet of bodies, and whoever ascribes to God a body is an infidel. And does a man whose knowledge is at this stage declaim in public? And tell me what is the meaning of what I am told you utter: *Thou hast taken me from me and not left me upon me, and lo, I am without an I*. We have discovered that you rant and lead men to suppose that you are "divines", incite them by your follies to wrong courses and stir up the sultan's capital against him. The scourge, slave!—People, however, pleaded for the man till he was spared, but the vizier issued an order that he might not speak in public or form a circle in the mosque.

78. My teacher in Basrah used to receive visits from a teacher whose original *kunyah* was Abu'l-Hasan, in lieu of which he assumed the *kunyah* Abu'l-Bayân. I heard my teacher remonstrate with him on that account, and say: My friend, you have changed your *kunyah*, which is a popular one and that of the Prince of Believers.<sup>1</sup>—He said: Abu Ja'far, how many people have you seen in your lifetime whose *kunyah* was Abu'l-Hasan?—He said: Innumerable.—And have you seen any Abu'l-Bayân except me?—No.—Then take this as one of its advantages—that I win celebrity by it, and have no one to share it. Another advantage is that I do not require a surname, and that people's attention is thereby withdrawn from my other failings.<sup>2</sup>

One day I saw him with my teacher in my school, at a time when the latter was taking us in poetry. It was his practice to make the lads stand in a row, and ask them to recite. He had done this on the particular evening, when Abu'l-Bayân appeared, and said to him: Abû Ja'far, what sort of recitation is this?—He asked how it ought to be.—I have, said the visitor, a method of managing lads, in which I make no indulgence, which I will describe to you, if you wish.—Our teacher bade him do so. He said: Tell your lads to obey my orders, so that I may show you.—Abû Ja'far bade them notice what Abu'l-Bayân told them to do and do it. Abu'l-Bayân proceeded to address them as follows: I say unto you, lads, and to such youths as

(1) i.e., Ali b. Abi Tâlib, in the opinion of the Shi'ah, the only Prince of Believers.

(2) As with the Romans personal names were frequently taken from bodily peculiarities, *Strabo*, *Naso*, *Crassus*, so with the Arabs distinctive names had a tendency to be derived from this source,

are near you in age, up to adults, listen and keep in mind, and if any one disobey after the matter has been explained to him, on him I shall bring down severe chastisement: Make your ranks serried, with your feet contiguous, lift up your tablets, turn your gaze towards me, keep your minds fixed on that which you recite, lift up your voices, and utter like one lad

Stay weep we at thought of one loved and her home.<sup>1</sup>

This line he sang at the top of his voice ; the lads could not restrain their laughter, in which my teacher joined.—Abu'l-Bayân said : Abu Ja'far, may dust and stones fill your mouth and cover your head, and may woe and trouble surround you ! Is this the respect which you want to teach them ? Curse and disappointment are your due ! You are ruining your own resources. Is your laughter a humiliation to me, or is it not rather a disgrace to you in the eyes of these scamps ? I call God to witness that I shall not speak to you again until you apologize.—Abu Ja'far gave a gentle and apologetic reply, and presently Abu'l-Bayân was conciliated. He used to compose poetry which he constantly recited to Abu Ja'far ; I remember none of it.

Had we not frequently repeated the words which I have recorded to each other when we were boys at school, they would not have remained in my memory. When I had grown up, I wrote them down somewhere, and forgot about them. Afterwards I copied them here, where they have remained until now.

When I was at school, I heard how he had come to my teacher, to whom he committed his own son. My teacher asked him why he had removed him from his former master. He said : Because I passed by him one day when his boys were abusing each other, and all he did by way of stopping them was to bid them hold their tongues, himself using various obscene expressions. In consequence, he said, I have removed him.

79. The following was told me by 'Abdallah b. 'Umar b. al-Harith. My father, he said, used to write the verses of the Qur'ân which serve as spells according to a prescription which had come into his hands.<sup>2</sup> One of these charms was for a woman who feared abortion, which would be prevented if she tied the charm to her waist. We tried this for a long series of years, and it never failed. He

(1) Opening line of the first *Mu'allaqah*.

(2) Some examples of such spells have been published by the translator in *Islamica* iv, 1980.

used to write *In the Name of Allah the Rahman, the Merciful. Verily God upholds the heavens and the earth lest they cease*, etc. (Surah, xxxv, 39). *Neither did they assign to Allah His true worth*, etc. (vi, 91). *And the trumpet shall be blown and there shall be smitten all that are in the heavens and the earth except whom God will to the end of the Surah* (xxxix, 68). *And A simile, a fair word like a fair tree*, etc. (xiv, 29). He used also to write the spell for recovering a runaway slave, which I have never known to fail. You should take a piece of parchment and write on it : *In the Name of Allah the Rahman, the Merciful. And the Man of the Fish, when he went off in anger, and thought that we should have no power over him down to We save the Believers* (xxi, 87). *Or like layers of darkness on a stormy sea, covered by waves down to the end of the passage he hath no light* (xxiv, 40). *And he cast lots and was one of the losers, and the sea-monster swallowed him, he being culpable* (xxxvii, 141). *Overtake him by the signs of Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the earth shall bring him back, and make what is between them narrower for A. B. (the runaway) than a lamb's hide, that we may get him in our power, for he is of Thy bounty and Thy gift*. The parchment should be buried under the threshold of a door.

He used also (he added) to write a charm on a paper for nose-bleeding, and attach it to the forehead of the sufferer. *In the Name of Allah the Rahman, the Merciful. And there was said : O earth, swallow thy water, and O heaven, clear down to the people that do evil* (xi, 46). *And when thou mentionest thy Lord in the Qur'an alone, they turn their backs, disgusted* (xvii, 49). He used also to write a charm against ulcer on a leaf of beet, which was then put on the ulcer : *Whatever good befalls thee is from Allah*, etc. (iv. 81).

80. I was told the following by Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. Abi Muhammad al-Silhi, clerk. I saw, he said, in Egypt a physician who had acquired fame there, named al-Qati'i. He used to earn every month a thousand dinars from stipends assigned him by generals of the army, and the ruler of the country, and fees from ordinary patients. A portion of his dwelling he had turned into a sort of hospital to house poor patients, whom he would treat, supplying what they needed in the way of drugs, food, and attendance, and spending most of his earnings on this. A lad belonging to one of the leading men in Egypt had a cataleptic fit (Abu'l-Hasan mentioned the man's name, but it has slipped my memory) ; I was present, and the medical staff including al-Qati'i were fetched. All except al-Qati'i agreed that the lad was dead, and the relations were

preparing to wash and bury the corpse. Al-Qatî'i said : Suffer me to treat him. If he recovers, all will be well. If he does not, nothing worse will have befallen him than death, which these people all suppose him to have suffered. —The lad's people left al-Qatî'i alone with him, and he asked for a powerful slave and scourges. These were produced, and al-Qatî'i ordered the lad to be stretched out, and ten violent blows to be administered to him. He then felt the lad's pulse, and administered ten more severe strokes. Again he felt the lad's pulse, and administered ten more blows. Then, after feeling his pulse, he said to the physicians : Does a dead man's pulse beat ?—They said No.—He made them feel the pulse, and when they had done so they said : The pulse is beating faster.—He administered ten more blows, when the pulse became vigorous ; after another ten the supposed corpse began to move, and after another ten he cried aloud ; the beating was stopped, and the patient sat up, feeling his body and groaning with pain, his strength coming back to him.—Al-Qatî'i asked him how he felt. He said he felt hungry.—Al-Qatî'i ordered food to be given him at once ; some was brought, which he ate, and his strength returned to him. We rose and by this time the lad was quite well.—The physicians asked al-Qatî'i how he knew this.—He replied : Once I was travelling in a caravan, in which there were some Bedouin serving as our escort. One of them fell off his horse and fainted. The people said he was dead, but a shaikh started beating him a number of severe blows which he did not stop till the man recovered. From that I learned that the beating produced the heat necessary to overcome the fit, and I regarded the case of this patient as analogous.

81. I was told the following by Abu Muhammad Yahya b. Muhammad b. Fahd al-Azdi, who had heard it from Abu Ali al-Husain b. Muhammad al-Ansârî, clerk. In my youth, he said, I used to stamp deeds in the presence of Hamd Dalawaihi, who at that time was clerk to al-Mu'taman Salamah,<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain of Qahir.<sup>2</sup> One day he was visited by Abu Ali al-Husain b. al-Qâsim<sup>3</sup> b. 'Ubaidallah and Abu Ja'far al-Karkhi,<sup>4</sup> who came to pay their respects. He kept them, in order to enjoy their conversation, seating them on a sofa in the chief place of a domed chamber, while he himself sat below them on a pile of cushions in a room connected by a door with the

(1) Probably the same as Abu'l-Qasim Salamah al-Tuluni, who acted in the same capacity for the Caliph Muttaqi. See Index to the *Eclipse*.

(2) Caliph 320-322.

(3) See Index to the *Eclipse*.

(4) Vizier and ridiculed for his short stature.

domed chamber. He seated his son and me with him in the former, thus showing that he regarded the two visitors as too grand to associate with lads like us. He meant thus to hear their conversation, and to enjoy the music, for contiguous with the domed chamber was another room wherein he had installed the musicians, a curtain having been stretched over the doorway. They started drinking, while we were listening to the music and to what they were saying, without raising our voices lest they should hear. In the middle of the drinking-bout some fresh fruit was brought in, which the host took; turning to the two visitors he said: It would be fair that I should divide this into three shares for the three of us, only I bestow my share on you, Sirs. So please divide between yourselves. Al-Husain b. al-Qâsim took the fruit, and said: Abû Ja'far, Sir, are you willing that I should take two-thirds of this and give you one-third?—Abû Ja'far asked why?—He said: Because you and your brother were born twins, so you are only half complete, whereas I am complete, having been born by myself. If your brother were present, he, you, and I should each have a third: he being absent you have no right to more than one-third.—Abû Ja'far said: This is marvellous. You are a man whose grandfather was a Christian, who believed that God was one of three. Then came your father, who became a dualist, dropping one step. Then you arose, and should by analogy have dropped one more step, but instead you have dropped two, and become an atheist, believing nothing at all! We have not reproached you with that, and do you reproach us with twinhood, which is not our fault, whereas the other is a real fault?—Al-Husain b. al-Qâsim grew angry, and started to reply. But Dalawaihi rose and said: I oblige myself to the treble divorce<sup>1</sup> and to bestow all my property in alms, if you, Sir, make any reply, or you, Abû Ja'far, Sir, utter another word. For this will proceed from a jest to a brawl, and permanent rancour and animosity. Your dignity, Sirs, is above such things.—The two kept silence, being at a loss; and the host kept on soothing them, allaying them, and reconciling them to each other till they made friends.<sup>2</sup>

(1) *i.e.* one which it is difficult to recall.

(2) This al-Husain was supposed to hold the opinions of Ibn Abi Azakir, which were sufficiently unorthodox to be branded as atheistic. He was afterwards banished by his brother, al-Karkhi's namesake, when vizier, in spite of the intercession of their mother, and of his own promise.

*(To be continued.)*

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.



# THE TABLE-TALK OF A MESOPOTAMIAN

## JUDGE

### PART II.

*(Continued from our last issue.)*

82. Muhammad b. 'Ubaidallah b. Sukkarah al-Hashimi, a descendant of 'Abdallah b. 'Ali b. al-Mahdi, generally known after his mother as Ibn Ra'it, just as Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi was generally known as Ibn Shaklah, after his mother, recited to me a satire on Abu'l-'Abbas b. Abi'l-Shawarib a descendant of Khalid b. Usaid al-Umawi, brother of 'Abbad b. Usaid, Companion of the Prophet, composed when this person was appointed qadi of qadis; the populace nicknamed him Hadandal. The satire ran as follows:

A robe of praise I've on Hadandal thrown;  
 May one who threw it ne'er a garment own!  
 I curse myself, whom folly did incite  
 To seek benevolence from such a wight.  
 How could I hope from foeman for reward,  
 Whose blood I had not wiped from off my sword ?<sup>1</sup>

83. There is a poem by Abu Firas al-Harith b. Abi'l-'Ala Sa'id b. Hamdan b. Hamdun al-Adawi al-Taghlibi commencing:

To halt by ruins art thou not ashamed,  
 When loan of youth by time has been reclaimed ?<sup>2</sup>

---

(1) The meaning is probably that he had previously satirized this judge, and then presented him with a eulogy.

(2) The erotic prologues often commence with the sentiments of the poet when in riding he sees the ruins of a former encampment of his lady-love.

The following lines occur in it :

How long the hours of night now seem to last !  
 How short they were in happy seasons past !  
 With comrades ever ready to my call,  
 No haste too great for them, and tankards tall.  
 I used what fortune lent without remorse ;  
 You ride your hardest on a borrowed horse.  
 When night had spent itself, a mirage floats  
 Wide as the sea and we therein like motes.  
 Water it seems at first before our gaze,  
 But turns to flame beneath the burning rays.  
 Beneath our chargers' tramp how oft has quailed  
 Some stranger land, whose thrones we have assailed ;  
 And when the raid was over, home we brought  
 Households entire, the spoil for which we fought.  
 Monarchs dethroned by us no longer reign,  
 And slaughtered tyrants unavenged remain.

There is another poem by him which commences

A plague on those grey hairs that now appear  
 and in which the following lines occur

A glorious task of me demands my soul ;  
 Patience would fail me ere I reach that goal.  
 And what avail farreaching thoughts in mind  
 Of man in strait environment confined ?  
 They bid me bide my time, but who can say  
 That death will bide my biding and delay ?

84. Abu'l-Faraj 'Abd al-Wahid b. Nasr al-Makhzumi, called al-Babbagha,<sup>1</sup> clerk, recited to me some verses of his own, describing wine which had been brought in a white vessel. They are to be found in his collected poems, and here are some extracts :

Hard by in Qufs a topers' haunt  
 Is famous, such as Christians want.<sup>2</sup>  
 A sky it is, where beakers roll  
 Around like stars, myself the pole.  
 Their substance is so delicate,  
 A glance might them annihilate.  
 Sunlight which sets not ; fancy, though  
 They're real ; water, could they flow.  
 Faultless except that they betray  
 The secret which their breasts convey.<sup>3</sup>  
 Hypocrisy's material here,  
 Not wholly false, nor quite sincere.  
 It takes, however different,  
 The hue of its environment.

(1) The Parrot.

(2) Qufs was a village between Baghdad and Ukbara, near the former, famed for its wines and taverns. Wine drinking is of course forbidden by Islam.

(3) A Maqamah of Hariri deals with this quality of glass.

Should silver claim it, golden wine  
 Within would say : its hue is mine.  
 With toasts it circulates, displayed  
 Like bride for wedding day arrayed.  
 Moonlike with glass for halo, and  
 Bubbles for stars : its sky my hand.<sup>1</sup>

85. He also recited to me the following fragment :

The nights of youth most joyful prove,  
 And sweetest is the time of love.  
 And among countries those excel,  
 Where neighbours are most amiable.

86. I was told the following by a medical man. We were told it, he said, by Abu Mansur b. Marammah, clerk of Abu Muqatil Salih b. Mudrik al-Kilabi, governor of the Tigris.<sup>2</sup> (This Abu Mansur was one of the leading men of al-Sarat,<sup>3</sup> who were proverbial for their multifarious attainments. He was a man of learning, whom I have myself met, though I did not hear this story from him.) He stated that he had heard it from a certain shaikh. One of our people, he said, suffered from dropsy, and despaired of his life. He was taken to Baghdad, where the physicians were consulted, who prescribed quantities of drugs ; presently, when they learned that he had taken them all without effect, they gave up the case, and told him that they had no cure for him, and he was doomed. The patient hearing this said to those who were with him : Let me now enjoy what I can and eat what I like, and do not kill me with attention before my time comes.—They told him to eat whatever he chose ; so he sat on a bench at the door of his dwelling in Baghdad, and he would buy and eat anything which came by in the street. One day there passed along a man who sold cooked locusts ; he bade the man sit down and bought of him ten *ratl*,<sup>4</sup> all of which he consumed. A little while afterwards he had an attack of diarrhoea, which took effect more than three hundred times in the course of three days. This made him so weak that his life was despaired of. Then the diarrhoea stopped, and with it all the mischief that had been within him, his strength returned, and he was cured. On the fifth day he walked out on his feet to attend to his affairs. One of the physicians seeing him was astonished

(1) If the wine stands for the moon, it is not clear how the bubbles can serve for stars.

(2) This must mean of some of the districts watered by the river, or of the canals.

(3) One of the most important canals, described in Le Strange's *Baghdad*.

(4) About a pound.

and asked him what had happened, which he recounted.—The physician said : The locusts cannot have had this effect ; there must have been something special about the locusts which have produced this result. I should wish you to direct me to the vendor of these locusts.—They proceeded to search for the man, till he passed by the patient's door a second time. When the physician saw him, he asked him of whom he had bought the locusts.—The man replied : I did not buy them, I catch them myself, and when I have secured a number, I cook them from time to time, and then sell them.—The physician asked where he caught them, and the man named a village a few parasangs from Baghdad. The physician then offered the man money if he would leave his business and go with him to the place where he hunted the locusts. The man agreed, and the next day the two started. The next day the physician returned, bringing with him some locusts, and a plant. Asked what he had got, he said that he had found the locusts which the man hunted feeding in fields covered with a plant called *mesaraeum*, which is a remedy for dropsy ;<sup>1</sup> if a drachm of it be given to a patient, it produces diarrhoea, which puts an end to the dropsy ; however one cannot be sure that the diarrhoea will stop, and this may cause the patient's death, so that its employment as a remedy is very dangerous. It is indeed mentioned in the books, but physicians rarely prescribe it owing to the serious risk. In this case the locusts fell upon the plant, and it was digested in their stomachs, then the locusts themselves were cooked, and as the result of these two operations the strength of the plant was greatly reduced, so that by the time the patient swallowed it it was no stronger than was necessary to effect the cure, and did not induce ceaseless diarrhoea. Hence the cure.

87. I was told the following by Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Tutu of Wasit Abu'l-Husain, who had heard it from Abu 'Ali 'Umar b. Yahya al-'Alawi of Kufah. Once, he said, when I was on the Meccah road, on one of my pilgrimages, one of the Kufans with us had an attack of dropsy and was seriously ill. One of the camel-trains in the caravan was seized by the Bedouin, and the sick man was mounted on one of these camels. When the loss was perceived we despaired both of the patient and the camel-train. We were returning to Kufah, and after a time the patient arrived there cured. I asked him to tell me his story and the cause of his recovery. He said : When the

---

(1) According to Ibn Baitar it produces dropsy.

Bedouin seized the train, they drove it to their tents which were only a few parasangs from the highroad. They made me dismount and, seeing the state in which I was, flung me down in the hindermost tent of the tribe, and proceeded to divide between them the contents of the train. I had to crawl and beg for food from tent to tent, and desired death, which had no terrors for me, and which I implored God to grant me. One day when they had returned from their ride I noticed that they produced some snakes which they had caught, and which, after cutting off the heads and tails, they proceeded to roast and eat. I said to myself: These people can eat these snakes and suffer no harm owing to the habit which they have acquired. Perhaps if I were to eat a little thereof I should die and be released from my sufferings. So I asked one of them to give me one of the snakes to eat. He flung me one, containing some pounds of roast meat, all of which I ate scrupulously in my desire for death. I fell into a sound sleep, presently woke up perspiring violently, and had an attack of diarrhoea which operated more than two hundred times during the rest of the day and the following night. It did not stop when I fell down helpless, and saying to myself, This is the road to death, I began to recite the creed<sup>1</sup> and pray for forgiveness. When it was light I observed my stomach and found that it had contracted very much and the pain had ceased. I thought to myself: What use is this, since I am dying?—When it was forenoon the diarrhoea stopped, nor did I feel its recurrence till the time for the prayer of noon arrived, when I felt hungry, and started crawling as usual; I then found myself at ease and my strength sufficient, so I made the effort, rose up, walked and asked the Bedouin for food, which they gave me. This gave me strength, and that second night I was cured, and found nothing the matter with me. I remained there a few days till I felt confident that I could walk with safety. So I started on my way with some of them, till I got to the highroad, which I then traversed on foot from station to station till I reached Kufah.

88. I was told the following by Abu Ahmad al-Fadl b. Muhammad, daughter's son of al-Mufaddal b. Salamah of Basrah. I was, he said, once with Abu'l-Husain Muhammad b. 'Ubaid b. Nasrawaihi, when there entered a strange poet who had come from Basrah, named al-Mutarriif al-Himyari. This person recited a fine eulogy of Ibn Nasrawaihi, who ordered his slave to present the

(1) Uttered by the pious on their death-beds.

poet with a gift which he whispered to the slave. When the poet rose, accompanied by the slave, the latter gave him the present. Suddenly the poet came back from the vestibule, flung the paper (which contained three dirhems) into the lap of Ibn Nasrawaihi, and proceeded to abuse him in vile language, and recited three witty lines which he had improvised and wherein he lampooned Ibn Nasrawaihi mentioning his name and lineage. He then departed.—Ibn Nasrawaihi bade me follow him and bring him back. I was to mollify the man and offer him a hundred dirhems from him, on condition that he should not repeat any of his satire.—I ran after the man and overtook him, and tried to mollify him, ultimately offering him the hundred dirhems. But he said : No, never will I accept favours from a man whom I have clothed with shame. He went off, and I do not know whether the poem was his or someone else's.<sup>1</sup>

89. The following was told by Abu'l-'Abbas al-Husain b. 'Ali b. al-Fadl b. Sulaiman of Wasit. I was sitting one day, he said, in the year 318 in Baghdad with a friend of mine at the Taq Gate,<sup>2</sup> and we were complaining to each other of our woes and cares, and the hardness of those times. (Had we those "hard times" now, we should regard them as the acme of comfort !)<sup>3</sup>. He said to me : Abu'l-'Abbas, console yourself. If a man were to stand up in this great thoroughfare and pointing with his hand to the Taq Gate were to cry out : O afflicted one !, there would not remain a single person in the whole street but would answer : Here I am !

90. When al-Ta'i assumed the Caliphate,<sup>4</sup> he requested the qâdi Abu Muhammad 'Ubaidallah b. Ahmad b. Ma'ruf to undertake his vizierate. The qâdi declined, but offered to manage affairs and direct the State for him<sup>5</sup> till

(1) The fee offered was certainly small, being about 1s. 8d. though those offered in our time (according to E. G. Browne in the IV volume of his *History of Persian Literature*) are not much better. Apparently the doubt refers to the eulogy recited by the poet. Such performances were often suspected of plagiarism, as the matter contained in the eulogies has often no special application.

(2) "The arched Gate called Bab at-Taḡ was at the eastern end of the Main Bridge of Baghdad, opening directly into the great market street of East Baghdad, from which the chief thoroughfares branched." Le Strange, *Baghdad*, p. 178.

(3) The troubles of the year 318 do not appear to have been very serious : both the preceding and the following years were more agitated politically. The author is probably thinking of the civil war which raged in his own time between members of the Buwaihîd family.

(4) A. H. 363 (A. D. 974).

(5) The Caliph's powers at this time were very limited.

the Caliph should appoint someone whom he thought suitable as his secretary. So the qadi came regularly, to give his personal assistance to the Caliph in the management of affairs, and often, when there was no clerk in the palace, he would write rescripts at the Caliph's dictation. The first day he had to discharge a vizier's function. Thus he had to draw up for the Caliph a rescript of which the following is a copy :

Let there be assigned in writing from the court to al-Husain b. Musa al-Musawi<sup>1</sup> the examination of appeals, the marching of the pilgrims on the feast days, and the registrarship of the descendants of Abu Talib of the Hashimite family.<sup>2</sup> Written by Ubaidallah b. Ahmad month and day added).

91. I read a letter written by Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Hilal the Sabian clerk in Jumada I 365<sup>3</sup> for Ibn Baqiyyah<sup>4</sup> who at that time was vizier of 'Izz al-Daulah to Abu'l-Muzaffar Hamdan b. Nasir al-Daulah, who was in Halwan as governor of that place and of the Khurasan Road.<sup>5</sup> He<sup>6</sup> had left his family in the house of Abu'l-'Ala Sa'id in Baghdad, and the letter is a request to him to remove his family from it. Abu Ishaq wrote the letter in his (Ibn Baqiyyah's) name, and I have copied it from the autograph.

I am writing (God prolong the life of the Prince, my master, and perpetuate His help and favour) on the . . . th day of . . . , being in good health. The Prince (God maintain his power !) is aware of my practice of observing obligations, even when their sanctions are feeble, and their claimants weak : and, extreme as is my scrupulousness herein, that of the Prince is yet more strict, obligatory, speedy, and fundamental. The place which Abu'l-'Ala Sa'id b. Thabit occupies in my life is too well-known to the Prince for me to state it : he is a part of me which is indistinguishable, as inseparable as one of my members. No trouble or vicissitude which time may bring about can alter principles or invalidate accepted doctrine. Now the nature of the trouble which overtook him and entered his house with him made it necessary that permission should be accorded him (the Prince) to house his family there.<sup>7</sup> Had any one but the Prince desired that of me, it would have been hard for him to obtain it; and I only granted him this, owing to my confidence that he (Abu'l-'Ala) would obey me, and was aware that the house is mine, for me to lend or reclaim, and dispose of like a proprietor. It is however improper for me to let Abu'l-'Ala, who is bound to me by so many ties and such a lengthy attachment, be kept out of his house, with his dependants removed from it, and I have sent many a message

(1-2) For the career of this very distinguished personage see Index to the *Eclipse*.

(3) Began January 6, 976. (4) For this person's career see Index to the *Eclipse*.

(5) The text has been corrected in accordance with what follows, and from the *Eclipse*.

(6) i.e. Abu'l-Muzaffar.

(7) This seems to be the sense, but the words are obscure and probably corrupt.

and many a letter on this subject. I am satisfied with their result, which is that her ladyship (the wife of Hamdan<sup>1</sup>) whom God protect, regrets what has happened, recognizes what is just, thinks it best to move out of the house, and is unwilling that the present state of things should continue; and indeed many a substitute is offered. I request my lord the prince to confirm her view and recognize what she recognizes, and to respect me in the first place, and the rights of Abu'l-'Alain the second, and write to his representative to accept what he offers,<sup>2</sup> and move thither, handing over the house. Had it been (God forbid!) forcibly seized,<sup>3</sup> I should have compelled him to relinquish possession, and should not have acquiesced in the owner being dispossessed; how much more when the house has been lent, which implies that it is to be returned. My lord the prince must use his judgment about this matter which is my special concern, and I hope it may not be necessary for me to say or write a word more about it, or venture on any further petition or iteration. I have sent with this letter a clerk (who will be introduced by Abu'l-Fath<sup>4</sup> Qurrah b. Danha) to ask with reference to it what the prince will learn from him, please God.

The signature in the handwriting of the Vizier is as follows :

I beg that the prince (whose might God maintain) will give me this house, and say no more. Salutation.

92. The following was narrated by Abu'l-'Ala Sa'id b. Thabit. I paid, he said, frequent visits to his majesty 'Adud al-Daulah in Baghdad in the year 364,<sup>5</sup> and when he saw me he used to ask me what made me so thin. When this question had to my mind been asked too often, I composed some verses which I recited to him :

Saith the lord of the earth unto me : Oh, how spare  
Is thy frame ! I reply : That is compliment fair.  
What more of a sword could admirer allege  
Than thinness with brightness and sharpness of edge ?  
Albeit my bones are so nude, they make shift  
The burdens of state to uphold and to lift.  
When matters grow crooked, I straighten the same  
By tact and address, such as few dare to claim.  
The look of my blade may the monarch displease :  
Yet sword without dint he will not find with ease.  
Full many a boon hast thou on me conferred  
For which gratitude has no adequate word.  
Full many a glance hast directed and look,  
Wherein the good will could be read like a book.  
Once let thy reliance on me stand confessed,  
Then fate has no power to alarm or molest.

(1) Probably the daughter of Sa'id b. Hamdan, *Eclipse* v. 255.

(2) Probably what is meant is some other residence suggested by Abu'l-'Ala.

(3) These words are not in the original; they may have been omitted by the writer as being offensive, or by the scribe, who appears to have copied this letter carelessly.

(4) Evidently the son of that Danha whom we have seen to have been a confidential agent of Nasir al-daulah, §9.

(5) See *Eclipse* v. 370., foll.



93. I was told the following by the Christian clerk Ibrahim b. 'Isa b. Nasr al-Susi. My father, he said, told me that he had been harbouring a grudge for forty years against a man who had done him an ill turn, but had not requited him until he died.

94. *Story illustrating the liberality of Saif al-daulah. Unsuitable for translation.*

95. I was told the following by Abul-Qasim b. Ma'ruf.<sup>1</sup> I went, he said, to Halab to pay my respects to the clerk Abu Muhammad al-Salihi and Abu'l-Qasim al-Maghribi, who were lodged in one house owing to congestion. On alternate days the agent of the one or the other used to come in the morning and supply the needs of themselves and the needs and allowances of their staff. When I was comfortably seated there entered a blind man, who after saluting took a seat, and said : I have certain claims on the prince Saif al-daulah, among them those of a neighbour, dating from the time of his residence in Mausil, so I have come to him, bringing a petition ; perhaps you will be good enough to convey it to him.—He produced a document of portentous size ; when they saw it, they said to him : This is too big ; the prince will not care to peruse it. You had better alter and abridge it, and return at another time, when we will take it and convey it to him.—He said : What I want is that you should kindly present this petition.—They tried to dissuade him, and presently he rose like one despairing, dragging his feet dejectedly. I felt compassion for him, so I rode to Saif al-daulah's residence, where he was seated. It was his rule that no one should be admitted to his presence except through a paper written by his door-keeper containing the name of the visitor or visitors ; when the prince had read the name, if he chose he would summon him, if otherwise order him to be sent away. When I had seated myself, the door-keeper presented to him a paper containing the name—son of—of Mausil, the blind. The prince said What, is this man alive ? Where is he ?—At the gate—was the reply. The prince said : Let him enter, for, from what I know of his reluctance to ask favours, he can only have come, I fancy, for some adequate reason.—So the man entered, and he proved to be the shaikh whom I had seen with al-Salihi and al-Maghribi. As he approached, the prince bade him come near, beamed on him, and said : My friend, had you not heard that we were on the earth, and did you not know our whereabouts ? Was it not possible for you

(1) Brother of the qadi of qadis.

to visit us, considering the strong ties which exist between us? You have wronged yourself and harboured a wrong opinion of us.—The man began to bless and thank the prince and make excuses, and the prince bade him sit down near himself. He sat for a time, and then rose and presented to the prince the identical petition which he had shown us. The prince took it and read it to the end, and then called for Yunus b. Baba who was his treasurer. When the treasurer appeared, the prince gave him certain orders, and then summoned the chief of the wardrobe, to whom he whispered something; then the master of the stable, to whom also he gave an order. They went away, and presently Ibn Baba returned and laid before him two enormous purses, containing over five hundred dinars, then came the chief of the wardrobe, bringing a quantity of clothing in good condition, suitable for summer and for winter, richly scented; also objects of metal-work, such as a casket, a mirror, and the like. Then there came the head of the furniture department, bringing carpets, rugs, satin spreads, linen goods from Saban,<sup>1</sup> and various sorts of coverings, to the value of thousands of dinars. The goods formed a small mountain in front of him. Saif al-daulah liked, when he ordered a present to be given to any one, that it should be brought into his presence where he could see it, and present it to the recipient. All these things were brought in, the blind man knowing nothing about it, and fancying that the prince was neglecting him, and treating him as an ordinary case.<sup>2</sup> The prince neither whispered nor said anything to the blind man; then came the master of the mounts, bringing a mule worth three thousand dirhems, with a heavy and handsome saddle. Then came the attendant and with him an attendant in new clothes, to whom the mule was given, which he stood in the open space below the dais whereon Saif al-daulah was seated. The prince then asked the attendant how much was his monthly wage. He replied: Twenty dinars.—The prince said: I make it thirty dinars a month, and I order you by way of service to me to attend on this shaikh, and see that you do your duty, show no dejection, and serve him well. Give him the wages for a whole year.—The money was paid the man at once. The prince said: Clear out a certain house for me.—The order to clear it was given.—

(1) Yaqut does not appear to know where this place was: the lexicographers say near Baghdad. Dozy suggests that this place is mythical, and that the word in the text is the Greek *sabanon*, which means some article of linen.

(2) This seems to be the meaning.

Then he ordered a boat to be brought from Tall Fafan<sup>1</sup> to the man's family in Mausil, containing two *kurr* of wheat and a *kurr* of barley, with a supply of Syrian vegetables and food-stuffs. These orders were all carried out, and then the prince summoned Abu Ishaq b. Shahram, generally known as Son of Zalum the singing-girl, who was his secretary and envoy to the Byzantine emperor,<sup>2</sup> whom he despatched on business great and small. The prince whispered something to him, and he (Abu Ishaq) took hold of the shaikh and began to address to him on behalf of Saif al-daulah a lengthy apology, saying : You have come to us at the very end of the year, when our funds have been divided between various claimants, visitors, and the army, and there are a number of chieftains standing at our gate, whom we have to satisfy. Were it not for this, we should have exceeded your hopes, but as it is we have ordered the following to be given you ;—Ibn Shahram proceeded to read out a list wherein all the presents were inscribed, clothing, furniture, etc.—I said to the prince Saif al-daulah : My lord, do not bring down this largesse on this shaikh all at once, so shortly after the despair which has befallen him, lest his gall burst.—When the shaikh had heard the whole of the statement, he burst into tears, and said : Prince, assuredly you have exceeded my hopes by many stages, and outdone my aspirations by many degrees ; you have more than discharged any obligations, and I am unable to thank you adequately. God however will see to it that you are thanked and rewarded on my account, and now grant me the favour of being allowed to kiss your hand, which is better than any gift.—Saif al-daulah gave him permission, and the shaikh approached him and kissed his hand many times. Saif al-daulah then drew the man to him and consulted him about something, at which the shaikh laughed, and said “Yea by Allah, prince”, twice. The prince then summoned the eunuch attached to his hareem, and whispered to him. The shaikh then departed to the house which had been taken for him, where the prince bade him stay till the prince had considered his affairs, when he would go off to his family.—I asked the eunuch of the prince's hareem what the prince had whis-

(1) “A place on the Tigris below Mayyafariqin wherethe Wadi al-Razm flows into the Tigris” (Yaqt). “The hill known as Tall Fafan, with a town of this name at its foot, stood on the northern or left bank of the Tigris, some fifty miles east of Hisn Kaifa, where the river makes its great bend south” (Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 113).

(2) He was afterwards employed by ‘Adud al-daulah as envoy to the emperor Basil, doubtless owing to his knowledge of Greek.

pered to him. He said : He told me to fetch one of his sister's slave-girls of exceeding beauty and dressed in garments worth more than ten thousand dirhems and take her to the shaikh. This was done.—I rose up and said : Prince, such an act as this of yours was never heard of the Barmecides or any one else.—He said : None of that ! What was the meaning of what you said to Abu Ishaq b. Shahram. Do not bring this down on him so shortly after the despair lest his gall burst ?—I said : Oh, an hour ago I was with Abu Muhammad al-Salihi and Abu'l-Qasim al-Maghribi, when there happened— (I told him the story), and this shaikh went away in disgrace ; then he came personally, and was treated so nobly by your highness. I feared lest learning this suddenly his gall might burst.—He said: Bring hither at once al-Salihi and al-Maghribi.—One of the two came before the other, and took a seat, but was not addressed by the prince till the other appeared. He then accosted them and said : Come, tell me, have I not bestowed benefits and favours upon you, made you famous, given you handsome stipends and exalted posts, while making your service light, and doing my utmost to discharge my obligations to you ?—They began to express their gratitude. He said : I do not want that. Answer Yes or No.—They answered : Yes, assuredly, and more.—He said : Then do I deserve of you by way of thanks and compensation that you should make men despair of me, tell them to hope for nothing from me, or of my charity, and ascribe to me in their eyes annoyance at the petitions of applicants, and miserliness towards the deserving. What harm would it have done you to take the man's petition ? Then if God caused bounty to come through me, you would have had a share in bringing it about ; whereas if I had displayed annoyance, it would have been attributed to me, whereas you would have been guiltless, and would have done the man the service he solicited. As it is, you have neither done him a service, nor have you served God, who has enjoined on His servants the sacrifice of dignity, nor been mindful of my favours to you.—He went on objurgating them in the strongest language, you might have thought they had committed a terrible crime.—They tried to apologize, vowing that they had only designed to save him the trouble of perusing a lengthy petition, and had desired the man to abridge his petition so that it might be easier to read. This would, they thought, have facilitated the man's success, and they had not imagined that the man had gone off in despair and dejection ; had they known that, they would have gone

after him to get back his petition and present it.—The people present started invoking blessings on Saif al-daulah, vowing that this castigation, this benevolence, and determination to practise generosity were even finer than his dealings with the man, noble as they had been ; no one on earth, they said, but you, would act in this way.

96. We were told the following by Abu'l-Husain al-Harithi of Nahr Sabus.<sup>1</sup> I was told, he said, by one of our shaikhs that Abu 'Ja'far al-Shalmaghani<sup>2</sup> was extremely intimate with Hamid b. al-Abbas, who, when he became vizier, took him with him to Baghdad, would take his advice on important matters, and employ him as intermediary in great affairs. When Hamid issued his terrible decree concerning al-Muhassin b. al-Furat,<sup>3</sup> the latter wrote to al-Shalmaghani, asking him to request Hamid to deal leniently with him and order the exactor to cease beating and humiliating him, and give him time to pay his fine. Al-Shalmaghani took up his case and approached Hamid to that effect ; Hamid refused ; al-Shalmaghani repeated the request in a crowded assembly, wherein each of them insisted, till ultimately Hamid said Bring Muhassin, son of the—,<sup>4</sup> and bring the slaves and the scourges. Al-Shalmaghani kissed Hamid's hand, but the latter would not yield, and swore that he would without fail cuff and beat Muhassin in the presence of that assembly. The attendants went off to fetch Muhassin, and when they returned bringing him, before Muhassin came in al-Shalmaghani rose and departed. Hamid was furiously angry, and came near arresting al-Shalmaghani and doing him some mischief ; he contented himself, however, with a pious exclamation and gave vent to his wrath by administering to Muhassin that famous cuff which was the reason why Muhassin put him to death when Muhassin's father was vizier for the third time.<sup>5</sup>—Al-Shalmaghani proceeded to enter the office of Hamid's chamberlain, greatly depressed, and began to complain to the chamberlain of what he was enduring ; they complained to each other, and kept saying : This man means to slaughter us all after Muhassin, and leave no survivor. Ye

(1) A canal one day's journey above Wasit, whereon there are villages." (Yaqt).

(2) Better known as Ibn Abi'l-'Azaqir. See Index to the *Eclipse*.

(3) See *Eclipse* iv. 71, where the process of Muhassin is described.

(4) Specimens of this vizier's language were given in Part viii.

(5) The cuffing is described in *Eclipse* iv. 71 ; the victim's head was first shaven lest the hair should deaden the effect. On p. 114 foll. the terrible vengeance taken by Muhassin is recorded,

people, what can a man do with himself ?—While this was going on, Hamid having dismissed his assembly and sent Muhassin back to his prison, after what had taken place, summoned his chamberlain, and asked him where al-Shalmaghani was.—In my room, he replied.—And what has he been saying ?—He has said nothing.—Hamid paused as if ashamed, and then told the chamberlain to fetch Shalmaghani.—When he came, Hamid said to him : Abu Ja'far, is it due to the friendship which I have shown you that you should be so loyal to my enemies, and leave my room when you see that I am about to chastise them ?—He said : Does the vizier mean to judge justly or merely bid me approve ?—He said : I will hear and judge justly.—He said : Vizier, this is a man whose cause I pleaded with you. Suppose he had been a greengrocer, not the son of a vizier, whose rank you know, and must respect, it would have been improper for you to refuse my request on his behalf, and, if you did refuse, to force me to remain seated and witness the ill-treatment of a man for whom I had interceded. Further, you are aware that fortune changes, and this act of yours may have a consequence from which may God protect you ! Supposing that consequence comes about, what harm will accrue to you from my life being safe and my fortune secure from the mischief these men may do ? From their being unable to say presently : It was because you despised us and would not intercede for us ; had he (meaning me) acted like a friend, the vizier who was so intimate with him would not have refused him. He can only have remained seated to witness our cuffing in order to gratify his spite. What further could be better for you than that your staff and your chosen friends and associates should have good qualities and dislike of evil ascribed to them, so that people might say : Were he not a good man, he would not have chosen good men as his associates ; he must have been driven to this action by anger and need of money, but otherwise his nature is kindly and that is his dominant quality, rather than that they should say : Being a bad man he has gathered bad men around him.—You may be sure that when I left your assembly I had made up my mind that you would ruin me ; I was aware that I had committed a breach of etiquette, and was not sure but that you would ruin me at once. But I said to myself : I will follow the right and abide by sound reasoning and prudence, even if I am to suffer. If I escape, it will be by the favour of God ; if I perish, God will deliver me.—Hamid was abashed and apologized to him ; he then bade him go and take

Muhassin by the hand.—Shalmaghani acted as intermediary and got Muhassin's torture alleviated.<sup>1</sup>

97. I found a letter in the handwriting of the vizier al-Muhallabi, addressed to Abu Salamah, which the latter presented to me, stating that it was from al-Muhallabi to himself, and it is in a handwriting which I know. It contains verses by the vizier :

Al-Fadl's scout, a letter, came  
Full of queer kindness like his name :<sup>2</sup>  
For which I thank, as thank the poor  
Enriched from wealthy donor's store.  
And which I guard, as captive might  
The promise of his life hold tight.

I also found a letter in the handwriting of Abu Muhammad (al-Muhallabi) written by him to Abu'l-Qasim b. Bulbul when the former was in very humble circumstances, containing the lines :—

Your note to me has brought the dawn ;  
When shall we meet, and see full morn ?  
Life will be sweet when that's fulfilled,  
Wings will be fledged, and cravings stilled.

The following verses were addressed by him to someone else :

By notes or messengers that please  
At times from fortune's spite he frees.  
His friendliness the more I prize  
Knowing how he dislikes such ties.  
The lavish donor may give more :  
On miser's bounty I set store.

The following also are by him :

Could I, my brother, sharer of my heart,  
Forget our covenant because we part ?  
When we are severed consolation find,  
Like someone more than kin and less than kind ?  
I swear by our affection, surer vow  
Than promise slaves with freedom to endow,  
A false suspicion wouldst thou round me tie,  
Whose ends thou canst not join : tis vain to try.

(1) This anecdote is an important addition to Miskawaihi's record. In *Eclipse* iv. 137 it is stated that when Muhassin came into power he employed Shalmaghani as his agent, and a friend of the latter, who was ready to shed blood, slaughtered men like sheep. Miskawaihi adds that Shalmaghani claimed divinity, a statement which is confirmed by Yaqut in his biography of Ibn Abi 'Aun, who suffered martyrdom for his belief in Shalmaghani. Letters are there quoted wherein the attributes of divinity are ascribed to him.

(2) The name al-Fadl signifies "bounty".

The following also :

My life be ransom for a brother dear,  
Whose notes are like good news when they appear.  
Who, not content his fellowship to give,  
Bestowing salutation bids me live.

The following also :

A letter has arrived, O welcome guest,  
A fount of life conveying to my breast !  
Pearls on a chain of gold I there discern,  
Each paragraph a masterpiece in turn.

98. We were told the following by Abu Mansur al-Qushuri, who belonged to the home-born troops.<sup>1</sup> When I was a lad, he said, I served in the apartment of Nasr al-Qushuri<sup>2</sup>, which was given up to the chamberlain in the palace of Muqtadir. One day Muqtadir went sailing unpreparedly, and crossed over to the Imperial gardens called Zubaidiyyah.<sup>3</sup> I was witnessing this among a party of servants and retainers. The officers of the table and the cooks were busy carrying vessels and food, and packing them in baskets which were loaded; Muqtadir clamoured for food; he was told that it had not been brought yet. He bade them see what there was. The attendants went off abashed, not venturing to come again and say nothing had come, and began to consult with each other about what they should do. They were heard by Ja'far, skipper of Muqtadir's barge, and chief of the sailors in the employ of the palace, and he bade them produce what was on the barge. There was extracted from the bottom of the barge a handsome hamper of thin bamboo, containing a cold kid, a chilled stew, rissoles, condiments, a fine piece of choice salt fish,<sup>4</sup> and some good loaves of wheaten bread. It was all clean, and this was a hamper which was made up for him every day in his house and brought to the barge for him to eat in his place there, so that he need not interrupt his duties. When the hamper was brought to Muqtadir, he was satisfied that it was clean, ate of the contents and was particularly pleased with the salt fish and the condiments, which he chiefly ate. Presently the viands arrived from his kitchen, but he said that on that day he would eat only of the food of the skipper Ja'far; so he finished his repast from this, and

(1) *i.e.*, sons of the mamluks or slaves who were trained to be the Caliph's guard.

(2) He was Muqtadir's chamberlain and figures on many important occasions. For his career see Index to *Eclipse*.

(3) See Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 113 full. In 306 A.H. Muqtadir temporarily established his residence here, on the Western bank of the Tigris.

(4) This rendering is tentative.



ordered the other viands to be distributed among the company. He then said : Tell him to bring the sweets.—He said : We know nothing of sweets.—Muqtadir said : I had no idea that there was any one in the world who ate food not followed by sweets.—The skipper said : Our sweets are dates and squeezed olives. If the Caliph fancies them, I will have them fetched.—Muqtadir said : No, those are distasteful “ sweets”, I cannot endure them. So bring some of our own sweets.—Some dishes were brought, of which he ate, after which he started drinking. Then he said to his chef : You are to make up a hamper every day on which you are to spend between ten dinars and two hundred dirhems,<sup>1</sup> and hand it to the skipper Ja'far ; it is to be always part of the equipment of the barge. If I sail one day unpreparedly as I have been doing to-day, it will be ready ; if however by sunset I have not sailed, it shall be a perquisite of the skipper Ja'far.—This was done till Muqtadir was put to death. Ja'far used to take the hamper, but frequently he would reckon the days and take dirhems instead, as indeed Muqtadir never again sailed unpreparedly, nor had need of the hamper.<sup>2</sup>

Similar to this is a story which I have heard about Mu'tadid. One day he asked for a particular dish, and was told that it had not been made that day. He said : The kitchen ought to lack nothing, so that anything which is ordered can be produced at once.—So he gave orders to the bureau of expenditure that this dish should be regularly prepared until orders came to stop it. In consequence it was regularly prepared, at considerable cost, but was not brought to the table, as they waited for a demand when it would be brought as ordered. A year passed without his demanding it, then an account was brought him, as he used to examine his accounts himself, and seeing how much had been spent on that dish during the year he was horrified, and said : God forgive me ! To think that all this money belonging to the Muslims should have been spent on a dish which I have not eaten ! This is the essence of extravagance. Put a stop to its preparation, and let there be no recurrence of this procedure in the case of this or of anything else.—Some say that the dish was of camel's

---

(1) The latter would be normally equal to 13½ dinars.

(2) The point of this anecdote is to illustrate the wastefulness of this Caliph, which is further exemplified in Part I.

meat,<sup>1</sup> that the cook had had to slaughter a young camel everyday to provide it, and that this had caused the great expense. Some however say that it was veal, and that a calf had been slaughtered every day ; others that it was chicken with sour milk. I have heard all these accounts.

99. We were told the following by Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ahmad b. Muhammad the Witness known as al-Tabari. We were told, he said, by the Malekite jurist Abu Bakr b. Salih al-Abhari, who survives till now, and is of high repute for integrity and learning, that he had seen in a dream a certain ascetic (whom he named). I seemed, he said, to be looking for him, and he came out from between some palm trees, having on him two wrappers, one for the lower and the other for the upper part of his body, like a man of Sind.<sup>2</sup> I said to him : Tell me something or give me some exhortation.—He said : Say : Lord, shorten my hope, beautify my acts, and rescue me from that desire.

100. He also told us the following. We were told, he said, by the Sufi Ja'far al-Khuldi that he had heard the following from the Sufi al-Khawas<sup>3</sup>. I sailed, he said, the sea with a party of Sufis, and when we had got far out, our vessel was wrecked, and we mounted planks belonging to the wreck, and some of us got safely to land on these. We landed on a shore about which we knew nothing, and we remained there some days, finding nothing to eat. We were facing death, and came to an agreement, saying to each other ; Come, let us make it binding on ourselves, if God should rescue us from this place, to give up something for Him.—So one of us said that he would never break his fast<sup>4</sup>, another that he would pray everyday so many inclinations, another that he would give up lying : when every member of the company had said something, they said to me And what do *you* say ?—I said : I will never eat elephant's meat.—They said : What means this frivolity at such a time ?—I said : I assure you I meant no frivolity ; from the time when you began I have been trying to think of something to give up for God, but cannot get myself to utter anything but that which I have said ; I have only said what I mean to perform.—They said : There may be something in this.—

(1) Miskawaihi records cases of camel's meat being eaten in emergencies, whence it would appear to have been unfashionable. See Index to *Eclipse*.

(2) At one period Sindian meant juggler, but this does not seem to explain what is meant here.

(3) Probably Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Isma'il, ob. 291. A.H.

(4) *i.e.*, during day-time.

After a time we separated and started scouring the country in search of something to eat, and presently we came upon a very fat elephant's cub. My companions took it and managed to slaughter and roast it, and bade me come and eat. I said : Only an hour ago I resigned this food for God Almighty's sake, and it may be that the words which fell from my tongue are to be the cause of my death, for I have eaten nothing for some days and have no desire for any other food ; but God shall not see me break my covenant with Him. So do you eat.—I then went away from them, and they ate their fill and were refreshed. Night came on and they went off to their several sleeping places while I myself retired to the root of a tree where I had been in the habit of passing the night. Little more than an hour passed when an elephant came out of the place whence we had secured the cub ; he was trumpeting and the whole country side was filled with the noise of that and of his tramping. He was searching for us, and we said to each other : Now our end is come. They gave themselves up for lost throwing themselves prone on the ground. The elephant came and started smelling each one all over his body, and when every part of the body had been smelt, lifted one of its feet and placed it on the man so as to dismember him, and when he perceived that the man was dead raised his foot, made for another man, and did with him as he had done with the first. This went on till no one was left but me ; I was sitting up, watching the proceedings, and uttering prayers for forgiveness. I had neither fled nor thrown myself on the ground. The elephant now made for me, and when he came near I flung myself on my back, and he came and smelt at all or most of my members, as he had done with the others, only he repeated the process with me two or three times, which he had not done with them. He then twined his trunk round me and lifted me into the air. I said : This is another mode of death wherewith he means to kill me.—He did not remove his trunk from me till he had set me on his back. I sat upright and looked after myself, thanking God that my death had been postponed, wondering one moment and expecting death another. The elephant rushed on at a great pace, till it dawned, when he stopped, raised his trunk to me, so that I thought my end had arrived, twined it round me, dropped me gently on the ground, and leaving me there ran off by the road on which he had come. I could scarcely believe my eyes, and when he got to such a distance that I could no longer see him, I started worshipping and praying. Examining the place I found that I

was on a high road, and having walked along this for some two parasangs, I came in view of a large town. Fort his I made, and when I entered it, I found that it was a great Indian city (he mentioned its name). The inhabitants marvelled at me, and asked me about my story which I told them, and they asserted that the elephant must have done several days' journey in that one night. I found means of getting away from them and travelling from town to town until I arrived safely in my own.<sup>1</sup>

---

(1) This anecdote is to be found also in the author's *Deliverance after Stress*, whence it has got into the Arabian Nights as one of the adventures of Sindbad the Sailor.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

(*To be continued*).

## THE TABLE-TALK OF A MESOPOTAMIAN JUDGE

### PART II.

(Continued from our last issue.)

101. He also said that he had heard the following from Ja'far (al-Khuldi). Once, he said, when I went on pilgrimage, I bade farewell to the elder Muzayyin,<sup>1</sup> the Sufi, and asked him to give something to take with me. He said : If you lose anything, or wish God to bring you and someone together, then say : *O Thou who gatherest mankind to a day whereon there is no doubt verily God will not violate His promise* (Surah iii. 7), *bring about a meeting between me and—* ; God will bring about a meeting between you and that thing or person.

I went also, he said, to the elder Kittani<sup>2</sup> the Sufi, and bidding him farewell, asked him to give me something to take with me. He gave me a gem with something engraved on it, like a talisman. He said : When you are in distress, gaze on this and your distress will disappear.

I went off, he said, and I never invoked God with that invocation about any matter, but it was answered, neither did I ever in distress look at that gem but the distress vanished. One day I was crossing the river in the direction of the eastern side of Baghdad when a violent wind arose ; I was in the *sumairiyyah*<sup>3</sup> and the gem was in my pocket. I took it out in order to gaze at it, but somehow or other it slipped from me into the water or the vessel or my clothes, and I was greatly distressed. I prayed God, reached the other side, and kept on praying to God that day, the following night, and some days, with the above invocation, and sometime afterwards I got out a box which contained my clothes, with the view of putting on some of them, and when I emptied the box I found the gem at the bottom. So I took it and thanked God.

(1) There were several Sufis of this name, see Nicholson, *Luma'* p. xxix. According to Sam'ani (*Ansab*) he is the ascetic who died 328 A.H., his name being Abu'l-Hasan Ali, Muzayyin meaning "barber."

(2) Probably Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. Ali b' Ja'far, ob. 322 A.H. See Sha'rani's *Tabaqat* i. 146.

(3) See references in the Index to *Eclipse* s.v. *Rivercraft* for this type of vessel, which was rowed by two men.

102. I was told the following by Abu'l-Hasan Ahmad b. Yusuf b. al-Buhlul al-Tanukhi,<sup>1</sup> who had it from Ahmad b. al-Tayyib.<sup>2</sup> I was, he said, in the presence of Mu'tadid, when there came a man who cried at the door: Advice!<sup>3</sup> Mu'tadid was informed of this, and said: Go out and bid him state what it is.—They came back and said that the man declined to state it to any one but the Prince of Believers. He said: Tell him that if it be not valuable advice, I shall punish him severely.—They went out and came back to say that the man consented to that condition. He was introduced in my presence, and saluted the Caliph, who asked him what his advice was. He replied: A charm which has come into my possession which will immediately stop the poison from a person who has been stung.—The Caliph ordered a scorpion to be brought. It might seem that one had been got ready, as it was produced straightway. The Caliph pointed to an attendant; it was flung on him and stung him so that he cried out. The man bade the attendant show him the place of the sting, which he did. The man then produced a piece of iron without an edge and began to rub therewith the stung and envenomed place from top to bottom, saying *In the Name of God*—<sup>4</sup> which he repeated a number of times till the attendant said that the pain had ceased from his hand entirely, except in the place of the sting where he still felt some remains of it. The man asked for a needle, and when it was brought he pricked the place, and some yellow matter came out. The attendant then rose up fully cured. Mu'tadid ordered that the charm should be copied and preserved in the treasury, and that the man should receive a handsome reward.

Abu'l-Hasan told me that he had tried this charm on a hornet's sting, and it had proved effective. It might well be tried on a snake-bite, for the man's phrase *stops the poison* includes all such cases. I myself saw him (Abu'l-Hasan Ahmad b. Yusuf) employ this charm in the mode described, and the person who had been stung would arise quite cured from the treatment.

I was told the above story by Abu'l-Faraj al-Mu'afa b. Zakariyya, a jurist according to the system of Abu

(1) A frequent authority for the anecdotes in part i.

(2) Author of a work on Baghdad.

(3) *i.e.* that he had important advice to offer.

(4) There follow a number of barbarous words, probably corrupted from some foreign language or languages.

Ja'far al-Tabari,<sup>1</sup> and one of the deputies of the qadi of qadis for part of the Black Country. I was told, he said, by the qadi Abu Talib b. al-Buhlul<sup>2</sup> on the authority of someone on the authority of Ibn al-Tayyib. (Abu'l-Faraj had forgotten the name of the man (someone), but I have no doubt that the person was Abu Ahmad al-Razi, though God knows best). The story is current in the Buhlul family on this person's authority who had it from Ibn al-Tayyib. The whole family employ this charm, and hand down both the formula and the action.

103. Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. Harun b. Yahya b. al-Munajjim<sup>3</sup> recited to me the following verses by himself which he had written to 'Ali b. Harun b. Khalaf b. Tayyab who had been away and failed to write. They were set to music by Abu'l-Hasan b. Tarkhan.<sup>4</sup>

Between fate and me there's a quarrel, which might  
Prove lengthy unless some excuse put it right.  
O thou both whose presence and script keep away,  
Can visit of either be hoped for some day ?  
Did hope not console me, a heart would soon break  
Which sorrow enfolds like a robe for thy sake.  
Of God's loving-kindness we must not despair ;  
The parted He gathers ; the distant brings near.  
Now should you rejoin me, well, that would be best ;  
How sweet such reunion of lovers, how blest !  
But should you stay absent, no solace were mine  
Save messenger bringing your greeting or line.

104. Abu'l-Faraj Ahmad b. Ali b. Yahya b. al-Munajjim<sup>5</sup> recited to me certain verses of his own, wherein the rhyming word was the same throughout though in different senses. The first was

My master art thou with a mind  
To tyrannize and be unkind.

They have already been inserted in another part of this work.<sup>6</sup>

(1) The historian and commentator on the Qur'an. He was the founder of a school of law which survived for sometime, his death-date being 310 A.H. It was not till about 400 A.H. that recognition came to be accorded to the four well-known schools to the exclusion of others.

(2) He is mentioned by Miskawaihi, *Eclipse*, iv. 330.

(3) 277-352 A.H. There is a biography of him in the *Irshad* v. 440, foll.

(4) He is mentioned by H. G. Farmer, *History of Arabian Music*, p. 171.

(5) Member of the same family as the author of the preceding ode. There is a brief notice of him in the *Irshad* i. 229, where it is stated that he wrote a universal history.

(6) We have already seen that the volumes of the work were composed simultaneously.

The *Ustadh*<sup>1</sup> Abu Ahmad al-Husain b. Muhammad b. Sulaiman recited to me the following by himself :

O thou whose figure is an Alif, and whose temples are a Lam, thou hast multiplied my censors, but were justice done thee they would not blame me.

105. I was told by one of the recognized Witnesses in Baghdad (who however asked me not to mention his name while he was alive, and I have accordingly not done so) that he was one of the four witnesses who were introduced with the qadi of qadis Abu Muhammad, who at that time held no office ; with us, he said, was Abu Bakr al-Isfahani, friend of Sabuktakin the Turk, freedman of Mu'izz al-daulah, when he usurped the power, and styled himself prince of princes. They brought us in, and there was not a seventh person with us, so that we attested that al-Muti' had abdicated, read to him the deed of abdication, and made him confess to its contents ; after which we went out and were taken into another apartment of the Caliph's palace, where we found ourselves in the presence of the prince Abu Bakr 'Abd al-Karim son of al-Muti', whom we proclaimed Caliph and saluted accordingly. We then went out and sat down in a room near his, in order to set our signatures in attestation to the deed of abdication.<sup>3</sup> The Prince of Believers, al-Ta'i', demanded water to drink, and one of the attendants brought him a mug containing water, which he drank. He then went out ; we saw the mug, and as I was thirsty, I said to him<sup>4</sup> *Ustadh*, give me drink ; and he brought me water in the identical mug, from which I drank. We then signed our names and departed.

(1) A title of honour at this time, see Index to *Eclipse*. It implies that its holder held some high office.

(2) The artifice in the original lies in the double sense of *lamu* for the letter of the alphabet, and for the 3rd person plural masculine of the verb *lama* "to blame." It does not seem easy to reproduce either the similes or the play on words in another language.

(3) In the *Eclipse* v. 354 this scene is recorded very briefly, and the date given as Dhu'l-Qa'dah 13,363 (Aug. 5, 974). The account of Sabuktakin's usurpation precedes this notice, and in the Index to the *Eclipse* a fairly full biography of this general will be found. The qadi of qadis Abu Muhammad is doubtless 'Ubaidallah b. Ma'ruf, who having been appointed in 360 had resigned office for a conscientious scruple, and was restored in 364. The statement here therefore agrees exactly with those quoted in the note to *Eclipse* ii. 339 (Arabic Text).

(4) The person meant would seem to be the attendant, for whom this address seems too lofty. It cannot of course be the new Caliph, and Sabuktakin should have been mentioned had he been intended.



106. Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi used to talk much over his repasts, and his conversation was most entertaining and his reminiscences of anecdotes and miscellaneous themes were most copious at his table, owing to the number of savants, clerks, and messmates whom he used to gather round it. I was often present. One day a partridge was brought in. He said: This reminds me of a quaint story, which was told me by someone who had been an associate of the governor al-Rasibi.\* Once, he said, I was dining with him, when there were many other guests, among them a Kurdish chieftain, who was a neighbour to Rasibi's province. This man had been a highwayman, but had sought amnesty from Rasibi, who had granted it, and made a friend of the man. The two had long been associated and the Kurd was at Rasibi's table on this occasion, when partridges were brought in, and Rasibi tossed one of them to the Kurd, in the style wherein great men pay compliments to their guests. The Kurd took the bird, and began to laugh. Rasibi was surprised at this, and said: What is the reason of your laughter, since we see nothing to occasion it?—The man said: An adventure which I once had.—Rasibi bade him narrate it.—He said: It is a curious thing which came to my memory when I saw this partridge.—Asked what it was, he said: When I was a highwayman, I was once going along part of a certain highroad on a certain mountain. I was alone on the lookout for someone whom I could strip of his garments, when a solitary passenger came towards me. I barred his path and shouted at him; he surrendered, and stood still, while I took all that he had on him, and demanded that he should undress. He did so, and started away; I was afraid that he might be met on the road by someone whose help he could secure in pursuit of me, in which case I should be hunted and being alone might be caught. So I pointed my sword at him meaning to kill him, but he said: My friend, what is there between us? You have taken my clothes and stripped me bare; What profit have you in killing me?—I paid no attention to what he said, tied him up, and was about to bring my sword down on his head. He turned to me, as if he meant to ask for something, and seeing a partridge standing on the hill he said: Partridge, bear witness for me before

\* His name was Abu'l-Husain 'Ali b. Ahmad, ob. 301. He was in charge of the region from Wasit to Shahrazur, etc., and the revenue for which he was responsible was 1,400,000 dinars annually. Yaqut, who gives these details in his *Geographical Dictionary*, praises his character warmly.

God that I am murdered !—I proceeded however to strike him till he was dead, and went my way. I never remembered this adventure till I saw this partridge, when, remembering the man's folly, I laughed.

The narrator proceeded : Rasibi's expression changed into one of anger, and he said : You may be assured that the evidence of the partridge will not be lost in this world this day any more than in the next world. My amnesty only applied to your acts of highway robbery ; God has not thereby absolved you of murders, and has caused you to confess to one in my presence. Slave, off with his head !—The slave with others hastened to batter him with their swords, and each of them dealt him a blow on the back of the neck till his head looked like a bisected cucumber, and rolled down in front of us while we were at the table. The trunk was dragged away, and Rasibi continued his repast.

107. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Hilal the Sabi'an clerk dictated to me a letter which he had written to a man who had given his mother in marriage. It was as follows :

God, to whom be praise, has made thee a man of sense profound and judgment sound, orthodox throughout and harbouring no doubt, and even as thou obeyest not passion to commit what is tabu'd, so thou yieldest not to pride to tabu what is allowed. We have learned how thou hast authorized a contract of marriage between thy mother (may God lengthen thy term for her !) and XY, endeavouring therein to obey the dictates of piety, while enduring sore trouble, in that thou hast amputated the nose of jealousy concerning her, humiliated the cheek of pride about her, angered thyself to please her, and resisted thy inclination to suit her mind. So we congratulate thee on the firmness of thy endurance, and condole with thee on missing thy desire. We ask God to grant His favour to thee, and cause the same to attend thee always in what thou desirest or declinest, avoidest or adoptest. And salutation.

He also recited to me the following verses by himself, which he had written and with which he despatched me to the prince,<sup>1</sup> who promised me that he would rescue him, but delayed doing so.

Champion of church and state, who hast repaired  
Its might, when reparation was despaired,<sup>2</sup>  
Is it too hard for thee, when thou didst save  
Thy liege and master, to set free thy slave ?

(1) The prince is the vizier Ibn Baqiyyah, as we learn from the biography of Ibrahim in the *Irshad* i. 345. 'Izz al-daulah Bakhtiyar had been rescued from his ambitious cousin 'Adud al-daulah, and restored to his throne in 364 to some extent through the efforts of Ibn Baqiyyah, though Miskawaihi (*Eclipse* v. 386), who is prejudiced against the latter, minimizes them. The Secretary of State Ibrahim the Sabi'an had for some reason been arrested by Bakhtiyar.

(2) Ibn Baqiyyah had just been given the title Nasir al-daulah "Champion of the empire." "Its Might" is an allusion to Bakhtiyar's title 'Izz al-daulah "Might of the empire."

108. The following verses were recited to me by an Egyptian who said they had been recited to him by Abu'l-Faraj clerk of al-Baktimuri,<sup>1</sup> a Syrian who is still living in Syria, as his own :

Thou hast, my life, my life possessed ;  
Granting, mine eye, mine eye no rest.  
Not, fickle one, was such my hope ;  
Parting came not within my scope.  
For thee the art of rhyme I learned,  
And so a poet's name have earned.

The following were recited to me by Abu Ghassan the physician of Basrah.<sup>2</sup>

My life be the ransom of one whose embrace  
Enfolded me, bringing his mouth to my face.  
When I said : My master, love makes me thy thrall,  
He answered : May freedom ne'er come to thy call.

109. I was told the following by Abu'l-Qasim Buhlul b. Abi Talib (the qadi, whose full name was Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Ishaq b. al-Buhlul al-Tanukhi)<sup>3</sup> which he had heard from the district chief of police at the Damascus Gate (he mentioned the man's name). He said : I was a police officer serving under Abu'l-Hasan al-Abza'iji,<sup>4</sup> who was Chief of police in Baghdad. He had fetched certain robbers out of prison and asked permission of Mu'izz al-daulah to impale and execute them at the Bridge. Mu'izz al-daulah gave permission for this to be done in the evening. There were twenty of them, and they were put in charge of a company one of whom I myself was, a certain person being appointed our chief. He said to us keep on guarding them the rest of this day and the night, and to-morrow morning I will decapitate them. So we passed the night turning it into day, a day however wherein both our chief and ourselves slumbered, so that one of the robbers managed to sever the rope and get down from the stake. We only woke up to the sound of a fall and a man running ; our chief ran after him, and so did I, but we could not catch him. We were afraid that the rest of the men, might become disorderly, and another escape. So we hastened back and sat down despondently thinking

(1) One Baktimur is mentioned by Tabari as governor of Hims in 260 ; a freedman of his would be called Baktimuri, and the son of such freedman might well be contemporary with the author.

(2) A person of this *kunyah* is mentioned in Part i, but is unlikely to be the same.

(3) For this person see Index to the *Eclipse*, where he is called Abu'l-Hasan.

(4) He was dismissed in 346 A.H. See Index to the *Eclipse*.

what we could do. Our chief said : Ibn al-Abza'iji will not overlook any offence of mine or accept any excuse ; he will suppose that I have taken money from the robbers and let the man escape, and will beat me to make me confess ; I will not confess, and then he will think that I am braving it out, and will go on beating me till I am dead. So what do you suggest ?—I said : You had better run away.—He said : Then how am I to earn my living ?—I said : Only half the night is passed, and no one knows what has happened. Let us walk about, and some unfortunate wretch will certainly fall into our hands, whose time has come ; you can secure him, impale him, and say to Ibn al-Abza'iji : You delivered to us twenty men ; for he has not taken note of their features.—The chief said that this was the best plan, so we started walking about, and walked along the Bridge Road, to examine the western bank. At the bottom of the steps of the Bridge we saw a man committing a nuisance ; we went in his direction and arrested him. He cried out : What do you mean, you fellows ? I am a boatman, who has just stepped up from my ferry-boat for this purpose, and here is my boat (to which he pointed) ; what have I to do with you ? We beat him, saying : You are the robber who escaped from the stake ; so we dragged him up, and set him on the stake where we bound him in place of the runaway robber. He kept howling and sobbing the whole night, so that our hearts were lacerated out of pity for him, as we said : He is a wronged man, only what expedient is there ?

Next morning al-Abza'iji rode to the prison, and by the time he had arrived there was a crowd gathered to see the execution. The boatman cried out Ustadh (this was how he was addressed as was the practice in the case of all heads of police in Baghdad), as you will stand before God summon me and hear what I have to say ; I am not one of the robbers whom you fetched out and ordered to be impaled, I am a wronged man, the victim of a plot.—Al-Abza'iji ordered him to be taken down, and bade him state his case. The man told him the actual facts, whereupon al-Abza'iji summoned us and asked us what this man had been doing. We replied that we did not know what he was saying ; You delivered twenty men to us, and here are twenty men.—He said : You have taken money from one of the robbers and released him, and have waylaid an innocent stranger and taken him.—We said : We have not ; this is the robber whom you delivered to us.—Al-Abza'iji decapitated the others, but spared the boatman, and bade

them summon the gaolers and porters. When they came, he asked them whether the boatman was one of the twenty whom they had taken.—They all studied the man's features and said that he was not.—He meditated for a time, and ordered him to be released, but then ordered him to be brought back. We brought him back, and al-Abza'iji said to him: Tell me your story.—He repeated what he had said before, and then al-Abza'iji asked him: What were you doing in that place there at midnight?—He said: I was passing the night in my boat, and feeling a certain need went up for the purpose.—Al-Abza'iji meditated for a time, and then said to the man: Tell me truly what you were doing there so that I may release you.—The man would tell him no more than he had said.—Now it was al-Abza'iji's custom when he wished to extract a confession to make the man stand between two persons and behind him a number of men with scourges, and when al-Abza'iji scratched his head, one sound blow would be administered to the person who was being examined; al-Abza'iji would then say to the person who had dealt the blow May God cut off your hand and your foot, you scoundrel! Who told you to scourge him? Come forward, my friend, no harm will happen to you, only tell me the truth and you will be safe.—If the man confessed, well and good; but if he did not, al-Abza'iji would scratch his head a second and a third time; this was always his procedure, and indeed with all culprits, and those who were employed in his presence were well acquainted with it. When the boatman persisted, he scratched his head, and one of those who were standing behind dealt the man a violent blow on the back of the neck, causing the latter to cry out. Al-Abza'iji said: Scoundrel, who told you to do that? May God cut off both your hands!—Then he said to the boatman: Now tell the truth and save your life.—The boatman said: Ustadh, Does God attest that my life and limbs will be safe if I tell the truth?—Al-Abza'iji said Yes. He does.—The man then said: I am a boatman, who works at a certain wharf;<sup>1</sup> my neighbours know me to be an honest man. Yesterday after the second evening-prayer having brought my ferry-boat to the Tuesday Market,<sup>2</sup> I was looking about in the moon-

(1) See Le Strange, *Baghdad*, p. 85.

(2) "The Lower Bridge of Boats from the time of Mansur till the middle of the fifth century A.H. connected the quarters of West Baghdad outside the Basrah Gate with the Tuesday Market within or above the gate of that name in the city wall of the Mukharriim quarter in East Baghdad." *Ibid.* 95.

light, when an attendant came down from a house which I do not know, and called out Boatman! I came forward, and he put in my charge an elegant woman with two little girls. Handing me some genuine dirhems, he bade me convey them to a certain wharf at the Shammasiyyah Gate. After I had rowed them part of the way the woman uncovered her head, and proved to have a face of extreme beauty like the full moon.

*The rest of this anecdote is too horrible and harrowing for translation. It may be thus summarized in Latin.* Cupivit eam, postulavitque ut secum coiret. Quod cum negasset, minatus est se primum filiolas postea illam ipsam in aquam demersurum esse, nisi fecisset. Filiolis occisis muliere potitus metuebat ne si salva evasisset ab ea accusaretur; itaque illam quoque demersit. In ripam egressus ab hominibus prehensus est. Præfectus cum hæc audivisset, quamquam incolumitatem pollicitus erat, jussit hominem manibus et pedibus abscissis securi feriri.

I was told by a trustworthy citizen of Baghdad that al-Abza'iji got his name through being the servant of a Turkish officer who was a retainer of Muwaffaq, named Abza'ij, which Abza'iji is very like.

110. I was told by Abu Bakr b. 'Uthman al-Sairafi, the poet<sup>1</sup>, that he had heard the following from 'Umar b. Aktham.<sup>2</sup> Certain persons, he said, wished to certify a death and a number of heirs before the qadi Abu 'Umar. They had promised the advocate fifty dinars for the business.<sup>3</sup> When the number of the heirs had been proved to the qadi's satisfaction by the evidence of two witnesses, they demanded that the advocate should take part of the fee and excuse them the rest. So he took what they were pleased to give, and then came before the qadi, their opponents being present in court, and said: Qadi, I have been briefed by these persons (the opponents) and have thrown up my brief for the first set.—The qadi bade him proceed.—He said: The two witnesses attested before the qadi that they were not aware of any heir except the persons whom they named; I have two approved witnesses who are aware of another heir.—The qadi bade him produce them, and the two men stood up. The advocate delayed the settling of the case, and went on doing so for a month, after which the heirs came to him and said: You have

(1) One Abu Bakr al-Sairafi is mentioned in Part i, p. 192 as an army pay-master.

(2) Deputy qadi and afterwards qadi in Baghdad, Index to *Eclipse*.

(3) This anecdote is of interest because we so rarely hear of advocates in Islamic courts. The few cases collected in the article *Meetings and Salons under the Caliphate* (*Islamic Culture*, 1927, p. 7) mainly refer to the representation of public bodies.

ruined us.—He replied : Through what “ your own hands have wrought.” By Allah I will delay your business a year, unless you give me fifty dinars afresh, for me to stop.—They gave him what he demanded, when he came forward and said : I have no evidence, and the qadi assigned them the inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

111. I was told by the same Abu Bakr the following, which he had heard also from Umar b. Aktham. An orphan, he said, who was ward of one of the Trustees<sup>2</sup> employed by the qadi Abu Ja'far b. al-Buhlul,<sup>3</sup> and having attained his majority had ceased to be a ward, presented himself before the qadi saying : Qadi, the Trustee XY has wasted so much of my property, and I demand it of him.—The qadi said : Smite the back of his neck ! Does he say this of a Trustee in whom I place complete confidence ?—The man said : Qadi, I did not say that he had embezzled ; no, he spent that amount more upon me than I needed, and that is “ wasting.”—Abu Ja'far summoned the Trustee, and asked him about the matter ; he confessed, and the qadi made him responsible for the sum.

112. We were told the following by Abu'l-Qasim al-Hasan b. Bishr al-Amidi. One day, he said, when Abu Ahmad Talhah b. al-Hasan b. al-Muthanna and I were talking about the relations between him and Abu'l-Qasim al-Baridi<sup>4</sup> and how each of the two was planning to arrest the other, and I was advising him to flee from Basrah and not stay there, bidding him make no mistake, he said to me : I am not anxious about this person for many reasons, among them a dream which I saw some nights ago.—I asked him what it was.—He said : I saw a great snake which was coming towards me out of this wall (he pointed to a wall in his house) and was making for me ; I struck it and fastened it to the wall ; and I interpret the snake as al-Baridi, and the dream to mean that I shall overcome him.—When he said *I fastened it to the wall*, it came into my mind that al-Baridi was the snake and that the wall

(1) There are some points about this interesting specimen of the practice of the Baghdad bar which the author left in obscurity. Who are “ the opponents ” ? They would seem to be people who also claimed a share in the estate. Nor is it clear how counsel could delay the granting of a decision, except by promising to produce the claimants, and these, we are told, were in court.

(2) These were persons appointed by the qadi to keep records and to discharge other duties.

(3) See Index to *Eclipse*.

(4) Son of the famous Abu 'Abdallah ; there is a notice of him in the Index to the *Eclipse*, p. 32.

was his wall rather than Abu Ahmad's, and I wanted to tell him that the interpretation was contrary to that of a dream wherein 'Abd al-Malik<sup>1</sup> saw himself wrestling with Ibn al-Zubair<sup>2</sup> on level ground, and Ibn al-Zubair nailed him to the ground with four pegs. 'Abd al-Malik sent a mounted messenger to Basrah, who met Ibn Sirin<sup>3</sup> and recounted the dream to him as his own, concealing the name of 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sirin said to him : This is not your dream, so I will not interpret it to you. When the man urged him, he said : This must be the dream of 'Abd al-Malik, and if you tell me the truth, I will tell you the interpretation.—The man admitted that it was as Ibn Sirin had thought.—He said : Tell him that if this dream comes true, he will wrest the land from Ibn-al-Zubair, and that four kings sprung from him shall reign over it.<sup>5</sup>—The man went back to 'Abd al-Malik and told him ; the latter was astonished at Ibn Sirin's acuteness and bade his messenger go back to Ibn Sirin and ask him how he knew.—Ibn Sirin said to him : The vanquisher in a dream is the vanquished in reality, and his being fastened to the earth is his gaining possession of it, and the four pegs which were driven into the earth are kings who shall be established on the earth as the pegs were fixed therein.—Abu'l-Qasim al-Amidi said : I should have liked to tell Abu Ahmad this and how it had occurred to me to interpret his dream on the analogy of that other, but I was unwilling to do so as it would have been ill-mannered, bad fellowship, and sounding his death-knell. Only a few days however passed before he was arrested by al-Baridi, and there happened to him what did happen.<sup>6</sup>

(1) Umayyad Caliph, 65-86 A.H.

(2) Pretender to the Caliphate, who maintained himself for a time in the Hijaz and was defeated and killed in 73 A.H.

(3) Jurist of Basrah 33-110 A.H.; his skill in interpreting dreams is noticed in Ibn Khallikan's biography of him.

(4) The text has Ibn al-Zubair : the dream was said to be his, and this is a relic of the earlier form of the story.

(5) They were the four sons of 'Abd al-Malik, Walid I, Sulaiman, Yazid II, and Hisham.

(6) Some light is thrown on this narrative by what the author tells us in *Deliverance after Stress*, i. 184. "When Abu Ahmad Talhah intrigued with the army of Abu'l-Qasim son of Abu 'Abdallah al-Baridi to arrest Abu'l-Qasim and imprison him in the house of Abu Ahmad, and that the Caliph al-Muti' should come or an army of his to (?) Basrah and take possession of it, and have Abu'l-Qasim surrendered to them by Abu Ahmad, and the affair was well known at the time." Miskawaihi apparently thought the event unworthy of notice.



Among the persons who were present with me when Abu'l-Qasim told me this story was Abu'l-Qasim 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Talhah b. al-Hasan b. al-Muthanna. He said : My grandfather<sup>1</sup> had queer dreams which never failed.

One was that I was in his presence when I was a lad in the tomb of my maternal grandfather and my father's uncle al-Husain<sup>2</sup> and I fancy that there was not more than a year between me and my brother.<sup>3</sup> Those who were around, he said, said to him : May God ruin the shaikh and do unto him ;<sup>4</sup> and he came away from the tomb. Seven days after this story he was arrested by Abu'l-Qasim al-Baridi on Thursday, 1st. Sha'ban, 335 (Feb 25, 947), in whose custody he remained for less than three months, when Abu'l-Qasim put him to death in the month Shawwal by a device arranged by the physician 'Abdan who tampered with some drink which he gave him (God's curse be upon him).

Abu'l-Qasim al-Amidi said : I was present at the beginning of the sitting and when he narrated his dream he interpreted it in a manner which did not come true.

*The rest of this anecdote furnishes no satisfactory sense owing to corruption of the text and the omission of many sentences.*

113. I was told the following by Abu'l-Qasim 'Abd al-Rahim b. Ja'far al-Sirafi, jurist and theologian, known as Ibn al-Sammak ( God have mercy on him ! ). I was present, he said in Shiraz at the court of the qadi of the place Abu Sa'd Bishr b. al-Hasan al-Dawudi, when there came before him a Sufi man and a Sufi woman. Now Sufism there is very rampant (he observed), it is said that the men and women who follow that system are in thousands. The woman demanded the help of the qadi against her husband, and when they presented themselves she said to him : Qadi, this husband of mine wants to divorce me, which he has no right to do ; would you please stop him.—Abu Sa'd began to ask me whether I was not surprised at this language, and to call my attention to the Sufi doctrines which it involved. Then he said to her :

(1) The Abu Ahmad Talhah who had the dream which has been narrated.

(2) This person (Talhah) claimed to be descended from 'Ali's elder son al-Hasan. The word "grandfather" here means ancestor, and "uncle" has a similar sense.

(3) It is evident that a considerable amount must have been lost here, as these words seem to have no connexion with the story, and what follows is unintelligible without further information.

(4) *i.e.* all sorts of evil.

How do you mean that he has no right to do this ? She said : When he married me his intent was stable, and now he states that his intent has ceased from me, whereas my intent is stable with regard to him and has not ceased. He must wait until my intent with regard to him has ceased even as his intent has ceased from me.—Abu Sa'd said to me : What do you think of this jurisprudence ?—He then reconciled the parties and they went away without divorce.<sup>1</sup>

114. I was informed by a number of learned persons that there is in Shiraz a man known as Ibn Khafif of Baghdad, head of the Sufi community there, to whom men gather and who talks to them about "imagination" and "suggestions."<sup>2</sup> Thousands attend his circle, and he is regarded by them as highly expert. He has perverted the weak-minded to this system. One of his followers died, a Sufi, who left a Sufi widow. There was a gathering of Sufi women, who were a multitude, and no one besides them attended the mourning. When they had finished the interment, Ibn Khafif with his intimate associates, also a multitude, entered the dwelling, and he began to console the widow in Sufi language, after which he said : I have administered consolation. He then said to her : Is any other here ?—She said : No other.—He said : Then what is the sense of our souls hugging the vexations of grief and being tortured with the torments of sorrow ? Why should we neglect amalgamation, so that the lights may meet, that the spirits may be purified, the substitutes fall and blessings descend ?—The woman said : If you will.—The two companies amalgamated for the whole night, and when morning came, the men were dismissed.

The expression "Is any other here ?" means "Is there any one here who does not agree with the system ?" And her answer "No other" meant "no one disagrees." "Amalgamation" has an obscene sense. "That the lights may meet" refers to their principle that in every body there is a divine light. "The substitutes" refers to the doctrine that every married person has a substitute for the dead or absent mate.<sup>3</sup>

(1) There is a chapter on Marriage in Nicholson's *Kashf al-Mahjub*, but it throws no light on the principle stated here.

(2) Both the words used here are found in the *Kashf al-Mahjub*, where the former is explained as "a transient state" and the latter as "a judgment of separation."

(3) It is unlikely that the author obtained these glosses from authoritative Sufis. The whole story is probably a calumny.

I regard this as atrocious ; had I not been told it by a number of persons whom I regard as unlikely to lie, I should not have repeated it, as too atrocious, and most unlikely to occur in an Islamic country. I was told that this and similar occurrences became so notorious that they reached the prince 'Adud al-daulah, who arrested a number of the persons, scourged and banished them, and by scattering the groups put a stop to such proceedings.\*

115. The following verses were written by Abu Firas al-Harith b. Sa'id b. Hamdan when he was taken prisoner

Whatever God decrees, man must perforce obey ;  
I robbed the lion once, now am hyenas' prey.

He addressed an ode to Saif al-daulah, from which I select two couplets :

My height aspiring souls alone attain,  
Who strive like me for honour might and main.  
For others by my side there is no room,  
Throned as I am on glory's towering dome.

He composed the following when the festival arrived and he was a captive in the Byzantine country :

O Feast, thou bringest no delight  
To one in sad and troubled plight.  
O feast, thou dost revisit eyes  
Debarred from thy festivities.  
How desolate that home, whose head  
In bondman's livery is clad !  
The festive dawn, arising there,  
Neither is fragrant nor is fair.  
What spite has fate against me, thus  
To deal me blows so marvellous ?

There is also an ode composed by him during his captivity, which commences :

Shedding no tear, endurance is thy trait ;  
Has love the tyrant on thy mind no sway ?

It contains the following lines :

Kindled by meditation and desire  
Between my ribs there all but sparkles fire ;  
Thy promises may soothe, but death comes first ;  
May rain cease falling, if I die of thirst !  
Ready am I to enter any fray  
Whence men avert their glances in dismay

---

\* Ibn Khafif of Shiraz is the subject of a paragraph in the *Kashf al-Mahjub* (p. 247), where he is represented as a model of chastity in spite of his nominal marriage to 400 wives. According to this work he gave his name to a sect or order. There is a reference to him in the *Luma'* (also edited by Nicholson).

I thirst till spear and soil are drenched with bloods ;  
 Hunger till wolf and vulture need no food.  
 Ne'er is the tribe or host by foe attacked  
 Not warned by me, made ready for the act.  
 On many a fort, which feared me not at all,  
 Some dawn with me has seen destruction fall.  
 Full many a tribe I've mastered in the field  
 Till sight of women's veils has made me yield.  
 Wealth with its pomp has never turned my head,  
 Nor poverty my bounty minished.  
 I seek no gold my treasury to fill,  
 Unless my honour be more copious still.  
 Captured was I, though armed was my force ;  
 Myself no novice, and no colt my horse.  
 But when a man encounters fate's decree,  
 He finds no refuge upon land or sea.

He proceeds

'Tis flight or ruin, said my comrades all :  
 I said : The sweeter of those two is gall.  
 I must proceed to that which shames me not ;  
 Captivity, ah me ! the lighter lot !  
 It boots not to avert by action base  
 Disaster as did 'Amr in like case.<sup>1</sup>

116. In Rabi II of the year 366 (began Nov. 27, 976) Abu Sa'id Musa'id b. al-Jahm al-Shaibani recited to me the following lines, which, he said, he had composed some seventy years before, adding that he was now ninety-six years old.

The glances of her eyes like scorpions sting ;  
 And mine are like a sky whose stars are tears ;  
 Careering in a field, where stumbling  
 The steed may throw his rider, so he fears.  
 Those tears with drops of blood behind them shed  
 Might be roan steeds by fiery courser led.

In the year 366 he recited to me the same verses with an improvement, " flame steeds, " which is more correct, since he meant that he was shedding tears of blood ; and this is proved by the phrase " with drops of blood behind them shed. " <sup>2</sup>

117. I was told the following by Abu'l-Fadl Muhammad b. 'Ubaidallah b. al-Marzuban, clerk of Shiraz, who

(1) The allusion is to the story that 'Amr b. al-'As being about to be slain by 'Ali, uncovered himself, which so shocked 'Ali that he let 'Amr escape. All these verses are to be found in the published *Diwan* of Abu Firas, a member of the Hamdanid family, of which Saif al-daulah and Nasir al-daulah were the most distinguished scions. See *Index to the Eclipse*, p. 50.

(2) This comment is clearly erroneous, since the colour of blood is indicated by " roan. " The fire or flame must refer to the heat of the tears. The verses can in no case be regarded as felicitous.

had it from Abu Bakr al-Ji'abi<sup>1</sup>, the Hafiz. One day (said the latter) I visited the qadi Abu'l-Husain son of Abu'Umar<sup>2</sup> and found him in sore distress. I said to him May God let no sorrow fall on the qadi ; what is it that I see ?— He said : Yazid al-Mani is dead.—I said : God preserve the qadi of qadis for ever ! Who was Yazid that his death should cause all this grief to the qadi of qadis ?—He said : Sir, can one like yourself say this about man who was unique in his profession, and whose death leaves him without a successor or any one to come near his skill ? What is the pride of a country except the existence in it of numerous leaders of the professions and savants ? When a man who has no equal in his profession, and that profession is indispensable, dies, what does that indicate but the deterioration of the world and general decline ?—After this he went on to enumerate his virtues and the ingenious remedies which he had applied, and the difficult cases which had been cured by his treatment, few of which have remained in my memory ; one however was the following.<sup>3</sup>

118. I was told the following by Abu'l-Mughirah Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Yusuf al-Asadi, poet of Baghdad, who said he had heard it from Abu Musa 'Isa b. 'Ubaidallah of Baghdad. He said that a friend of his had narrated to him as follows. I was on my way to Ramlah, by myself ; by the time I reached it the people were asleep, so I turned aside to the cemetery, and entered one of the domes over the graves. I threw down a leather shield which I had with me and flung myself upon it, but kept my sword tight ; I meant to sleep in this place and enter the town when it was day. The place however seemed to me uncanny, and I was sleepless ; when I had been awake for some time, I perceived motion ; I supposed them to be robbers who were passing, whom I might not be able to assail with safety, as there might be too many of them. So I kept in retirement and did not move : presently I put my head out of one of the doors of the dome, in great trepidation. I saw a creature like a bear walking, and concealed myself : the creature made for a dome which faced mine and was near it, looked about a long time and circled round it, then looked about for a time and finally went inside. This creature and its procedure roused my

(1) His name was Muhammad b. 'Umar, and his death-date 855.

(2) See Index to the *Eclipse* for this person's career.

(3) The anecdote which follows is to be found in *al-Faraj ba'd al-shiddah* ii. 101. It is unsuitable for translation.

suspicion, and I was curious to know what it was doing. Having entered the dome it came out again without pause, and entered and came out several times. Presently while under my inspection it entered and struck its hand on a grave inside the dome ; so I thought this must be an exhumers, without doubt. Watching the creature digging with its hands I felt sure that it had an iron tool and was digging with it. I left it alone till it felt secure, and had gone on digging for a long time, when I seized my shield and my sword, and walking on tiptoe entered the dome. The creature perceiving me rose up to a man's height, and made as if it would strike me on the face with its hand. I struck at it with my sword, and severed the hand which flew off. The creature cried out : God's curse be on you, you have killed me, I think—and ran off while I followed behind. It was a moonlit night, and the creature entered the town followed by me, though I could not catch it up : only it was within the range of my vision, as it passed down a number of streets, which I marked in order not to wander,\* finally came to a house-door, which it pushed open, and after entering locked. Following on, I marked the door, and retraced my steps, following the marks which I had made until I came back to the dome where the exhumers had been. Searching for the hand I found it and took it out into the moonlight ; after some trouble I extracted the amputated hand from the iron tool, which was a gauntlet of the same shape as the hand, with fingers into which the fingers had been stuck ; the hand itself had been treated with henna, and had on it two gold rings. When I perceived that it was a woman's, I was grieved, and examining the hand saw that it was as soft, moist, plump, and elegant as any in the world. Having wiped the blood off it, I went to sleep in the dome in which I had at first been, and the next morning when I entered the town I looked out for my marks, and so found my way to the door. I asked to whom the house belonged, and was told the qadi of the town. A crowd gathered there, and presently there came out an old and distinguished looking man, who proceeded to lead the morning prayer, and then took his seat in the prayer-niche. This increased my wonder at the affair, so I asked one of those who were present what was the name of the qadi, and he told me. I then embarked on a long conversation about him, and learned that he had an unmarried daughter and a wife. I had no doubt that the exhumers was the daughter. I then

---

\* He must mean on his return.

approached him, and said : There is a matter which I must discuss with the qadi (God exalt him !), and which is only suitable for a private interview.—The qadi rose and went to the inner part of the mosque, where we were alone, and bade me speak. I produced the hand and asked him if he knew it.—He examined it for a long time, and then said : I do not recognize the hand, but the rings belong to an unmarried daughter of mine. What is the story ?—I narrated it to him, in a whisper, and then he bade me come with him and took me into his house, of which he locked the door. He then called for a tray and food, and summoned his wife. The attendant told him that she asked how she could come out when he had a strange man with him. He said : She *must* come and eat with us, as this is a man with whom I do not stand on ceremony.—She declined, but he vowed that he would divorce her unless she came, and then she came in tears and sat down with us. He bade her bring her daughter. She said to him : My friend, you are mad ; what has come upon you ? You have disgraced me, an old woman ; how can you do the like to an unmarried girl ?—He however vowed that he would divorce her unless she brought the girl. The latter was then produced, and he said to her : Eat with us.—I beheld a maiden fair as a golden dinar, never had I gazed on one who equalled or surpassed her ; only her hue was very yellow, and she was ailing. I understood that the cause of this was what I had done to her hand. She started eating with her right hand, concealing her left. Her father bade her show her left hand. She said : There is a bad swelling on it, and it is bound up.—He vowed that she should show it. His wife said to him : Man, cover your own disgrace and your daughter's.—Then she said, confirming her statement with a number of oaths, I never learned any harm about this girl till yesterday,\* when she came and woke me after midnight and said : Mother, do something for me, or I shall die.—I asked her what was the matter with her.—She said : My hand has been amputated ; and she showed me the stump. I started beating my face, but she said : Do not disgrace us both before father and the neighbours by screaming, but apply treatment.—I told her I did not know what treatment to apply.—She said : Take some oil and boil it and cauterize my arm with it.—I did this, cauterized it and bound it up. I then bade her tell me what had happened to her. At first she declined, but I swore that

---

\*She should have said " last night.

if she did not tell me, I would disclose the affair to her father.—She then said : Some two years ago it occurred to me to dig up tombs. I instructed this handmaid to buy me a goatskin with the hair on it, and I had a pair of iron gauntlets manufactured. When you were asleep I would open the door and order the girl to sleep in the vestibule without locking the door. I would then put on the skin and the gauntlets and walk on all fours ; any one who saw me from a roof or elsewhere would assume that I was a dog. Then I would proceed to the cemetery, having ascertained in the day what important persons had died and where they were buried. I would go to the grave, exhume the corpse, take the grave-clothes, put them inside the skin, walk home as before and as the door was not locked I could enter and lock it. I would then remove the costume and hand it over to the maid with the clothes which I had taken, all of which she would conceal in a repository unknown to you. I had collected somewhere about three hundred winding-sheets, and did not know what to do with them ; only I felt in these expeditions and proceedings a certain pleasure for which there would appear to be no reason except that it had this trouble in store for me. Last night I was attacked by a man who noticed me ; either he had been sitting there or was guarding the tomb ; when I began to dig it up, he came upon me ; I started to strike his face with my iron hand, meaning to escape while he had that to think of, but he attacked me with his sword and I received the blow with my left hand, which it amputated.—I said to my daughter : Pretend that there is a swelling on your hand, and that you are ill ; your pallor will confirm this. When some days have passed we shall tell your father that your hand must be amputated, otherwise the poison will spread to your whole body and you will die. He will give permission for its amputation, and we will pretend that the amputation is fresh, and so your story will be kept dark.—We adopted this plan after I had told her to repent, and she declared herself penitent and vowed that never again would she do the like. I had also decided to sell this slave-girl, and in future to look more carefully into the way in which this daughter of ours passes her nights, and to keep her by my side. And now you have disgraced me and disgraced yourself !—The qadi asked his daughter what she had to say.—She said : Mother has spoken the truth and I swear that I will never do this again. She declared herself penitent. The qadi said to her : Here is the man who amputated your hand.—She almost died of chagrin.—He



then asked me whence I came.—I said I was from Iraq.—Why have you come here ? he asked.—To look for a living, I replied.—He said : A livelihood has come to you which you may lawfully enjoy. We are people of means whom God has screened ; rend not that screen. I swear that I knew nothing of my daughter's proceedings, and what say you to marrying her, and to my rendering you independent of other people by my wealth ; and living with us in this house ?—I agreed, he had the food cleared away, we went to the mosque where the people were gathered expecting him, he delivered the nuptial address, solemnized the marriage between us, and then rose and returned home. We were taken into the house, and love for the girl took possession of me till I nearly died of it. She stayed with me some months, disliking me, though I courted her favour, shed tears over her hand and offered excuses which she pretended to accept, alleging that her state of mind was due to grief over her hand. At last one night when I had been sleeping soundly as usual, I felt a heavy weight upon my chest, and woke up in alarm. I found her kneeling on my chest with her knee fixed on my hand, and a razor in her hand ; she was going to cut my throat. My waking confused her ; I wanted to free myself, but this was not possible, and I was afraid she would get in her blow first. So I ceased moving, and said to her : Say something to me and then do what you like. What is your motive in this ?—She said : Do you suppose that having cut off my hand, disgraced me, and married me, you are going to escape scot-free ? By Allah, this shall not be so.—I said : You have failed to cut my throat, still you can deal me some wounds ; only there is the chance that I may escape and cut your throat, or get away and give information about you, so that you will be handed over to the government, when your first crime as well as your second will come to light, you will be cast off by your family and executed.—She said : Do what you like, only I must certainly slaughter you, as each of us has become afraid of the other.—I considered and found escape from her improbable, since very likely she would wound some part of my body, which would cause my death. So I thought a ruse would be most effective. So I said : What of some other course ?—She bade me say what I meant.—I said : Let me divorce you immediately, so that you will be free of me, and I will leave this town, so that we shall never see one another again ; there will be no scandalous revelations about you in your town, and you

will be able to marry whom you please ; the story has been circulated that your hand was amputated owing to a tumor causing gangrene, and you may hope that there will be no disclosure. She said : Will you swear not to remain in the town and never to disgrace me ?—I swore (he said) the most solemn oaths, and she rose from off my breast and started to run for fear I should lay hold on her ; having flung the razor somewhere unknown to me, she came back and pretended that the whole thing had been a jest done for my amusement.—I however bade her begone : It is, I said, no longer lawful for me to touch you, and to-morrow I will depart from you.—She said : Now I know that you are in earnest, and by Allah, had you done anything else, you would not escape from my hand. She then rose and produced a purse. Here, she said, are a hundred dinars, take them for your expenses, write out a bill of divorce for me, do not betray me, and depart.—Next morning I departed after writing to her father that I divorced her. I departed alive, and have never come across them to this day.

119. Abu'l-Mughirah, the narrator of the last anecdote, was a voluminous poet, naturally gifted, a satirist, but the author of numerous encomia, and a bulky diwan, out of which he recited to me certain pieces, one of them the following :

A mine of magic are the eyes  
 Of one whose love has brought me low ;  
 Thither my heart's direction lies,  
 Drawn by the temple of that brow.  
 A scorpion it might seem to be,  
 Whose sting save hers no body spares ;  
 Blame not my passion, for its plea  
 Is beauty which no rival shares.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE TABLE-TALK OF A MESOPOTAMIAN JUDGE

(Continued from our last issue.)

120. I was told the following by the *Ustadh* Abu Ahmad al-Husain b. Muhammad b. Sulaiman, the clerk, known as al-Zanji.<sup>1</sup> One night, he said, at the time when I was deputy to Sahl b. Bishr<sup>2</sup> for the districts of Ahwaz, I saw a dream, in which I seemed to have gone out into the fields and climbed a lofty mountain; when I had reached its summit, I had got near the moon (or the moon came near me), so near that I touched it with my hand. I had a wooden rod in my hand, which I stuck into the moon, and worked it till I had pierced it and broken it into fragments. With the same rod I caught a cloud that was near the moon, and began to daub it till I had plastered the whole. Then it seemed to me that a friend asked me what I was doing; and I replied I have slain the moon, and am daubing it with this cloud.—At this point I woke up, and as this dream agitated my mind, I went in an early hour to Abu'l-Hasan Ahmad b. 'Umar al-Talaqani,<sup>3</sup> the clerk. When he saw me, he said: Yesterday I saw a queer dream about you, and wanted to come to you at once to interpret it to you.—I said: I too saw a dream yesterday which has disturbed me, and I have come to tell it to you.—He asked me what I had seen, and I narrated the dream to him. He said: Do not worry about it; you will be appointed to the post of Sahl, b. Bishr and very shortly take his place.—I asked him whence he knew this, and what was it that he had seen. He said: Yesterday I had a dream in which I seemed to be interviewing a saint—I fancied he was one of the Prophet's Companions—whom I was asking to pray to God for me. He said: Is al-Dulji<sup>4</sup> your friend?—I said: He is.—He said: Tell

(1) A different person from the Zanji mentioned in §21.

(2) For this person's career see Index to *Eclipse*. He farmed the land-tax of Ahwaz for 'Adud al-daulah.

(3) Several persons with this *nisbah* are known, but not apparently this.

(4) This seems to be the correct *nisbah* of al-Zanji.

him that Ahwaz is committed to his trust, and he must fear God and not annoy his wife.—Doubtless, he added, this dream is the interpretation of yours.—I asked him to say nothing about the dream, and we parted. I went home, and was not aware that I had been annoying my wife in any matter save the purchase of slave-girls; for there was one who had been in my house about a year, and whom I was inclined to favour above my wife. I immediately sold her to a purchaser, and presented the price, many thousand dirhams, to my wife. A year, more or less, after this<sup>1</sup> the vizier Ibn Baqiyyah came to Ahwaz with 'Izz al-daulah, and arrested the general Bukhtakin Azadruyah, the Turks, and Sahl b. Bishr. Presently he released the general, who received the title The Most Noble Chamberlain, and was entrusted with the contracts for revenue-farming, whereas I was appointed in lieu of Sahl b. Bishr.<sup>2</sup>

For a time Sahl remained in the custody of Abu Ahmad (al-Dulji), then he ('Izz al-daulah ?) removed him from his power and he was brought to Baghdad. Then occurred the episode of the occupation of Baghdad by the prince 'Adud al-daulah,<sup>3</sup> when Sahl was released and put in charge of 'Askar Mukram, Tustar, Jundaisabur, and their dependencies. 'Adud al-daulah deprived Abu Ahmad of his office and imposed a fine on him. He kept to his house in Ahwaz and went on paying the money till Sahl b. Bishr revolted and entered Ahwaz with the army advocating the sovereignty of 'Izz al-daulah;<sup>4</sup> Abu Ahmad joined them, out of fear for his life and fear of Sahl. He remained in Arrajan a year and a month, then made an arrangement with the Dailemite force in Ahwaz that they should mutiny and declare that they were not satisfied with Ibn Baqiyyah being vizier, and that nothing would content them except his removal and the appointment of someone else;<sup>5</sup> otherwise they would not approve of 'Izz al-daulah remaining Emir. He took an oath from the officers and the rest of the army in the districts of Ahwaz, that they would obey him. He gave out that he intended marching to Baghdad

(1) A. H. 363. See *Eclipse* v. 351.

(2) This is not mentioned by Miskawaihi.

(3) *i.e.*, his first occupation of the metropolis, when he had been sent to help 'Izz al-daulah against mutineers.

(4) The text has 'Adud al-daulah; but the events are clearly described by Miskawaihi (*Eclipse* v. 389), where it appears that Sahl was acting in the interest of 'Izz al-daulah against Ibn Baqiyyah.

(5) This other person was Sahl himself.

to urge these demands. This was in Sha'ban of the year 365 (began April 4, 976). The prince 'Izz al-daulah disapproved of this,<sup>1</sup> and sent one of his most distinguished chamberlains, Ibrahim b. Isma'il<sup>2</sup> with a message to the Dailemites, who repented of their proceedings, and resumed their allegiance. Sahl b. Bishr was arrested by him and brought to Baghdad before 'Izz al-daulah, who bestowed a robe of honour on Abu Ahmad,<sup>3</sup> whom he sent to Ahwaz as governor of it and its districts, so that Ahwaz became like something "committed to his trust;" for which no one else was suited, and where no one but himself was known when something was required.<sup>4</sup>

121. I was told the following by Abu Muslim Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Mahdi, clerk of Ispahan. At the time, he said, when Sahl b. Bishr was taking the oaths of the Dailemites and their officers to mutiny and demand the dismissal of the loyal vizier Nasir al-daulah,<sup>5</sup> I had a dream in which I seemed to have come out into a vast plain, wherein I saw an enormous camp with tents and canvas and marquees; through the middle ran a river providing water, on the banks of which there was a vast privy, and all the men of the camp, officers and the rest, were gathered there eating the filth. The chief chamberlain came out from among them, having eaten of this filth, washed his mouth all about with water, rinsed it, and mounted. The others did not do the like, and I seemed to be wondering at this, when my eye fell on a canvas over a roof, and I asked to whom it belonged. Someone said: To al-Dulji. Now Abu Ahmad al-Dulji was at this time in Arrajan, and they said it belonged to him and that he had arrived. So I said: I will go and see him and salute him.—So I started and presently reached the bottom of the place where the canvas was, when there was a gale, which wrecked the tents which were in the camp, and I saw none of them remaining. Then I looked and saw women, lads, young men and old holding up the canvas. I asked who

(1) As Miskawaihi explains, he had been won over in the interval by Ibn Baqiyyah.

(2) For his career see Index to *Eclipse*.

(3) The text says "on him," which should refer to Ibrahim b. Isma'il; but the point of the story is that al-Husain b. Muhammad al-Dulji's dream was fulfilled. According to Miskawaihi (v. 390) Sahl's brother was given the appointment.

(4) If this anecdote is correct, it is strange that Miskawaihi should fail to mention this person.

(5) Title given to Ibn Baqiyyah in 364.

they were, and was told by someone that they were the Talibites<sup>1</sup> holding up the canvas of al-Dulji so that it might not be pulled up by the wind. I woke up and the next morning narrated the dream to Sima al-Dar'i chief of police, and said to him : Nothing will come of the enterprise on which these people are engaged ; al-Dulji will be put in control and will come from Arrajan.—He said to me : What do you mean ?—So I narrated the dream to him<sup>2</sup> and he said : The kindness of al-Dulji to the Talibites is what will sustain him.—Not many days had passed before Ibrahim the Chamberlain arrived, arrested Sahl b. Bishr and conveyed him in fetters to Baghdad with the rest of the army. As for the Most Noble Chamberlain Bukhtakin, he had written about the affair to the prince and the vizier, and advised them to arrest Sahl b. Bishr without delay, stating that he (Bukhtakin) had defied him (the prince 'Izz al-daulah) for fear of being assaulted by the Dailemites and he escaped thereby from trouble ; this was the meaning of his rinsing his mouth and washing off the dirt. The others who were overwhelmed, they were the Dailemite general al-Husain b. Ahmad b. Kundar and the Jilite general Takidar b. Sulaiman.<sup>3</sup> When these two had come to Wasit they were arrested and banished, and their goods confiscated. Abu Ahmad al-Dulji came to the metropolis, and was put in charge of Ahwaz and its dependencies. He (Abu Muslim) used to tell us this story in the presence of Abu Ahmad (al-Dulji) some time after he had entered Ahwaz.

122. I heard Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi dictating a letter to Sa'd b. 'Abd al-Rahman who was at that time farmer of the revenue of Basra by Muhallabi's appointment, in partnership with Abu'l-Husain Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Ubaidallah b. al-Husain al-Ahwazi, and Abu 'Ali al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Mahdi al-Ispahani, sister's son to Sa'd b. 'Abd al-Rahman. He was addressing him on the subject of arrears of money, and urging him to remit it in courteous language hitting the mean between gentleness and severity. At the end of it he said : Were I to refrain from demanding the money of you, the prince Mu'izz al-daulah would not refrain, and it is better that you should pay it so as to win praise than so as to earn censure. Take the view that I am advising you as a friend to pay it, and avert the violence of the prince by this amount, which I would not in the

(1) *i. e.*, descendants of Abu Talib father of ' Ali.

(2) Apparently he had already done this.

(3) See Index to the *Eclipse*.

case of a friend make excessive ; for one who gratifies his friends in the days of his good fortune is gratified by them in the days of trouble. And know that the only thing that comes between my using this mode of address and my changing to the contrary form, such as is used towards recalcitrant officials, and treating you accordingly is the arrival of a reply to my letter containing no mention of the transmission of money.<sup>1</sup> God forbid that this should happen. So choose for yourself, or refrain. Salutation.

123. One day I heard Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi say with reference to a discussion on munificence which had taken place in his house, when a number of people were quoted : It will conceal those vices which calamities would reveal.

124. The following was told me by Abu Muhammad Dasah. We were told, he said, by Abu'l-Abbas Ahmad b. Ishaq al-'Amidi generally called Ibn Abi Safwan, a shaikh who served as deputy judge for Abu'l-Qasim al-Tanukhi in Wasit and its dependencies and the dependencies of the districts of Ahwaz at different times, that he had been informed by someone who was present in the chamber of the qadi Abu 'Umar, when his son-in-law Ibn Ghassan entered, and the qadi asked the latter whence he had come. He replied : From So-and-so's house.—The qadi said : It is folly to pay respect to one who has neither religion nor worldly goods.

125. We were told the following by Abu'l-Qasim 'Umar b. Hasan b. al-Husain Witness of Baghdad, who had held the office of qadi in Diyar Mudar, having been appointed by the qadi of qadis, and was of acknowledged rank. I was, he said, with Salamah al-Tuluni,<sup>2</sup> brother of Nujh,<sup>3</sup> when I was a lad, once when there were in his chamber a number of people censuring miserliness ; Salamah had this quality attributed to him, though he was not a miser, only careful and skilful in finance. When the others had departed Salamah said to me : Abu'l-Qasim, do not listen to this talk or pay any attention to it, or you may be ruined. Better to be miserly than to beg of a miser.

I was with him, he added, at the end of his residence in Baghdad and before the entry of the Dailemites;<sup>4</sup> there

(1) The meaning of this complicated sentence is clearly that should such a reply arrive, the vizier will immediately change his tone.

(2) See Index to the *Eclipse*.

(3) At one time prefect of police in Baghdad.

(4) *i.e.*, with Mu'izz al-daulah in 384 A.H.

were people present who were attacking the Witnesses and censuring them. Salamah said to them: I find your conduct most extraordinary. Who is there among you who would be content to buy of his son or his brother an estate for ten thousand dinars without having the contract witnessed by certified Witnesses?—They admitted that there was no one among them who answered to that description.—He proceeded: And do you secure such a large amount or a larger one to yourselves and your descendants only by attestation, and make their autographs on a strip of parchment worth a silver danak serve as a substitute for such a vast sum, so much so that you treat the deed as the equivalent of the money and put it under your heads at night for greater security?—They said: That is so.—Then, he said, why do you find fault with persons whom you so regard?

126. I was told the following by Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. al-Hasan b. Raja b. Abi'l-Dahhak; he was called al-Dinari, because his mother Dinar claimed relationship with the wife of Abu 'Ali b. Muqlah known as Umm al-Fadl al-Dinariyyah; I also heard Abu'l-Qasim al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Muqlah repeat this story in almost the same language. One day, they said, Abu 'Ali b. Muqlah had been having a meal, and when the table had been removed and he had washed his hand, he saw on his garment a yellow spot coming from the sweet which he had been eating. Opening his inkpot he took out some ink with his hand and dripped it on the yellow mark until no trace of it remained.

That, he said (referring to the yellow mark) would be a blemish, whereas this (the ink) is a mark of my profession. Then he recited the verses:

Saffron is girls' scent, I think;  
But the men's perfume is ink.

He recited to me the following by himself:

Orange trees whose loads of fruit  
Look like caskets filled with pearls;  
Or amid their green array  
Might be cheeks of peeping girls;  
Loved one's scent to lover taking.  
Sorrow whence he knows not waking.

Also the following on an orange:

as fair as youth, whose days  
Hurry on till eld delays;  
And whose oranges might be  
Beauties guarded jealously.  
All that grieves they give to you.  
Fairness and its fragrance too.



When like hearts themselves they seem.  
Hearts no wonder yearn for them.<sup>1</sup>

127. The following verses by Abu'l-Hasan Ahmad b. 'Ubaidallah of Baghdad known as al-Nadimi were recited to me by himself :

Those branches, see, their oranges reveal.  
Fair to the eye and fragrant to the feel.<sup>2</sup>  
Like domes of emerald o'er fire-flames red,  
Oh, how they blaze and their aroma shed !  
Or liken them to ears of chargers bold  
Laden with necklaces of flaming gold.

128. I was told the following by Abu'l-Hasan Ahmad b. Muhammad 'Abdallah b. al-Hasan of Ahwaz, clerk. There were, he said, five of us who had been trained as clerks under Abu'l-Hasan b. Jamil in the bureau at Ahwaz. One of us was weak in professional skill. On one occasion Ibn Jamil wished to get away from his chief, and delegated his duties to that incompetent official. We were annoyed at his being preferred to us. When he went to see the chief, if he were asked about anything he would not understand the question, or, if he understood it, would give no proper answer, and if he did answer, would display confusion and could give no reason. When this had gone on for some time, the chief said : Our affairs are suffering from the absence of Ibn Jamil, so write to him to hasten back.—We knew then that Ibn Jamil had made this man his deputy to act as clerk in his place to the chief, who would not then wish to displace Ibn Jamil.

129. I was told the following by Abu 'Ali Muhammad b. Jumhur al-'Ajami, of Silh and Basrah, a man of worth, famous as a savant, poet, and author of books. I was, he said, clerk to Abu'l-Fadl b. Ghailan b. Isma'il, who was governor in Arrajan. He was told that Abu'l-Mundhir al-Nu'man b. 'Abdallah<sup>3</sup> had arrived on his way to Fars, and that it would be proper for him to go to meet al-Nu'man. Abu'l-Fadl was suffering from quartan fever. What, said he, am I to do ? To-morrow is the day of my fever, and I shall be unable to meet the man. The right plan for me will be to have my attack to-day so that I may be able to meet him to-morrow. Slave, bring me the overcoat so that I may have my attack to-day.—His idea was that if he chose to hasten the attack and recovery,

(1) The point of this couplet is obscure. Perhaps Ibn Muqlah had some difficulty with his rhymes.

(2) Literally "in the hand."

(3) He was at one time governor of Ahwaz. <sup>1</sup> See Index to the *Eclipse*.

on the following day the attack would not recur and he would be well.

130. The following was told me by the Ustadh Abu Ahmad al-Husain b. Muhammad al-Dulji.<sup>1</sup> I was once, he said, in the neighbourhood of Madhar<sup>2</sup> with a company, among whom was a foot-soldier of the Shakiri force,<sup>3</sup> known as Ibn al-Jarih. A lion sprang upon us, and this man rushed at it with his sword and target. He entered the thicket with it, and we knew not what had happened to him till he came out towards us, having killed the lion, and carried it on his back. There was a considerable distance between us and the thicket, and when he had reached us he flung the lion off his back. We did not know at which we should wonder the more, at a man killing a lion singlehanded, or his carrying it on his back all that distance (*The real wonder is that any one should believe the story*).<sup>4</sup>

131. He also told us the following. I was informed, he said, that the following anecdote was related by Khafif al-Samarqandi.<sup>5</sup> We were with my master Mu'tadid on one of his hunting expeditions; he had got separated from his army, and there was no one with him but myself. A lion appeared and made for us. Mu'tadid said to me: Khafif, are you any good?—None at all, sire, I replied.—Not so much, he said, as to hold my horse while I dismount and deal with the lion?—I said: Yes, I can do that.—He dismounted and gave me his horse, tightened the ends of his belt, flung the sheath to me, and advanced towards the lion, dealing one blow and then another, with which he clove the lion's skull, so that it fell dead close to him. He then wiped his sword clean in a piece of wool, came back to me, sheathed his sword and mounted. After this we rejoined the camp and his retinue. To the day of his death I never heard him narrate the story of the lion or utter one word about it; and I do not know at which I should wonder most, his tremendous courage, his regardlessness of and silence about his exploit, or his pardoning me and never upbraiding me for my anxiety about my life.

(1) See above §§ 120, 121.

(2) See Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 43. "Madhar is described as lying four days' journey from Basrah, and was celebrated for its beautiful mosque and the much venerated tomb of 'Abd Allah, son of the Caliph 'Ali."

(3) Said to mean mercenaries.

(4) The words in italics are evidently the comment of a sceptical reader.

(5) Deputy Chamberlain to Mu'tadid at his accession in 279 A.H. He is also mentioned by Tabari in the years 284 and 287.

132. We were told the following by Abu'l-Hasan Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Umm al-Mukatib<sup>1</sup> of Baghdad, whose father was known as Abu'l-Laith of Hamadan. I was told, he said, by Muhammad b. Sari<sup>2</sup> the 'Uqailite, one of their captains and a leading member of the tribe, who came to the court of Mu'izz al-daulah and was honourably entertained by him, as follows. I saw an 'Uqailite, he said, who had all over his back incisions like those made by a cupper, only larger. I asked him about this,<sup>3</sup> and he replied : I fell in love with a cousin, but her people told me they would not marry her to me unless I made part of the wedding gift a racehorse called Shabakah, which belonged to one of the Banu Bakr b. Kilab.<sup>4</sup> I agreed to this condition, and started off scheming to steal this horse from its possessor in order to obtain possession of the bride. I went to the tribe in which the horse was to be found in the character of a smith ; I visited them repeatedly and at times would enter the tent where the horse was kept as a beggar, and so learned in what part of the tent the horse was kept at night. I then contrived to enter the dwelling from the back, and got behind the press, under a mass of wool which had been carded ready for spinning. When night came on and the woman had got ready the man's supper, and the two sat eating, as it was quite dark and they had no lamp, I being hungry put out my hand and stuck it into the dish, and ate with them. The man, perceiving my hand, and feeling alarm, seized it, so I seized the woman's hand. She said to him : What do you want with my hand ?—He, thinking that it was the woman's hand which he had seized, let go of mine and I let go of hers. We continued eating, and the woman, alarmed at my hand, seized hold of it, so I seized the man's ; he asked her what she meant, whereupon she let go of my hand, and I let go of his. When the meal was over, the man lay down on his back to sleep, and when he was fast asleep, I watched, the horse being chained at one side of the tent, while its foal was unchained in the tent, and the key of the horse's chain was under the woman's head.

(1) "Son of the Mother of the man who contracted for his manumission by payments."

(2) The father's name is given differently in other versions of this story.

(3) Apparently they were produced by the thrusts of the owner of the horse.

(4) A clan of the tribe Rabi'ah ; details of its location are given by Wüstenfeld in his *Register zu den genealogischen Tabellen*.

Presently there came a black slave belonging to the master, and threw a pebble. The woman woke up, and went out to him, leaving the key in its place. She went outside the tent, being spied on by me. When the two were occupied with each other I crept and, taking the key, opened the lock. I had with me a hair bridle, and with this I bridled the horse, which I then mounted, and rode away from the tent. The woman now re-entered it, and screamed; the tribe took alarm, and perceiving me rode in pursuit. I urged the horse on, with a number of them behind me; when morning came there was only one horseman behind me, who had a lance. He overtook me by sunrise and began to thrust at me, but his thrusts did not reach me, nor yet could my horse carry me to such a distance that the lance could not touch me at all; till we came to a large river, when I shouted to my horse and it jumped the river, whereas my pursuer's horse, though he shouted to it, would not take the jump. When I saw that he was unable to cross I halted to rest my horse and rest myself; the man shouted to me, and when I turned my face towards him, he said: My friend, I am the owner of the horse which is under you, and this is its foal; now you have got possession of her, never let her go, for she is worth ten ransoms three times over. Never have I pursued anything upon her, but I have overtaken it, nor has any one ever pursued me when on her back but I have escaped him. She is called Shabakah (*Net*) because she never yet wanted anything but she attained it; catching it like a net.—I said to him: As you have given me some good advice, I must also give you some. What happened to me yesterday was as follows—I told him the story of his wife and the slave, and my expedient for securing the horse. He hung his head, then raised it and said: What business was it of yours, may God give you no good reward for your visit! You have divorced my wife, taken my mount, and killed my slave!<sup>1</sup>

133. The following also was told us by Ibn Abi'l-Laith (the narrator of No. 132). I was informed, he said, by one of the Banu Tamr b. Qasit,<sup>2</sup> a Bedouin named Dukain, whom I saw at Anbar,<sup>3</sup> that when Mu'izz al-daulah came

(1) This anecdote is of interest for indicating what the Bedouin conceived to be his legal rights.

(2) This tribe is not to be found in Wüstenfeld's lists.

(3) "Al-Anbar 'the Granaries,' standing on the left bank of the Euphrates, was one of the great cities of Iraq in Abbasid times." Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 66, where a valuable account of the history of the place is to be found.

to Sinjar,\* he had a valuable horse of his tied up as near as possible to his sleeping place. I admired (said the Bedouin) this horse and wanted to steal it ; so I made my plans for this purpose, but got no chance till one night when I found that one of the grooms was asleep, and had divested himself of a woollen *jubbah* which he had thrown on the ground at his side. I donned this *jubbah*, went to the horse and took hold of the nosebag which was on its head with the view of loosing the animal and mounting. When I had thrown down the nosebag Mu'izz al-daulah woke and I perceived that he was moving. So I seized the sieve, flung therein the remains of the barley in the nosebag, sifted it and returned it to the nosebag, to make Mu'izz al-daulah suppose that I was one of the grooms and had been doing this by way of looking after the horse. When he saw me doing it he called out in Persian in such a way that I understood his meaning : He has had enough barley, do not put it back on his head. So I left the nosebag alone, and the horse made a plunge to get at it. Mu'izz al-daulah said in Persian : Shorten the halter ; this gave me a chance, so I put my hand on the halter, and loosened it, while pretending that I was shortening it, mounted the animal's back, shouted to it, and departed from the camp. The prince Mu'izz al-daulah screamed, and the fastest riders in his army chased me. I galloped on, with the whole party behind me, till I got into a long ravine. They were still following when I was faced by a foraging party whom I could see from a distance by the light of their torches ; there were troops with them. I said to myself : Dukain, this is your day. Troops behind you and troops in front of you, and if they get hold of you, they will not bring you alive to Mu'izz al-daulah. You must make for any course in which you think salvation lies.—It occurred to me that I had better charge the party in front, since they knew nothing about me ; so I drew a sword which I had on me above my own clothes, but under the *jubbah* which I had taken from Mu'izz al-daulah's groom, urged on my horse, not being seen by them, as they were in the light whereas I was in the darkness, and when I got near them, shouted loudly at them. They supposed me to be an outpost of a surprise squadron which was on the lookout for them, so I proceeded to charge them one by one, they avoiding my blows and I avoiding theirs, till I had got clear of them. While I

\* On the occasion of an expedition against Nasir al-daulah in 347, see *Eclipse*. V. 183.

went on, the horsemen who were behind came up with the other party, and wasted a little time in asking about me ; thus I escaped both parties, and rode on into Syria, where I sold the horse to Saif al-daulah for 3,000 dirhems. I went about the countries, and presently came to Baghdad. Mu'izz al-daulah was looking out for Arabs to enrol and despatch on an expedition. I was named by the 'Uqailite al-Musayyib b. Rafi<sup>1</sup> among a number whom he presented to the prince, who accepted the nomination. When I stood before him, he looked at me superciliously, because I was small, and said (in Persian) "twenty dinars," which I understood. The two 'Uqailite chieftains, al-Musayyib and al-Muhanna, spoke to him, and at their request he added three dinars. They said to him : He is a man of worth and station, and of family and of courage.—He said : Supposing all our forces were of this sort, what could they do ?—I asked one of the sergeants to interpret what he was saying, and the man interpreted it to me. I said : Prince, I can do something. I can pretend to be the groom of a horse in the presence of such a sovereign as you, devise a scheme for seizing it, and mount it.—I then told him the story of what had happened to his horse at Sinjar, and how I had sold it and what it fetched.—He said : Then you are the man who had to do with the horse at Sinjar ?—I said : I am.—He laughed and bade them put me in the forty dinar list, which they did.

134. The following was told me by Abu'l-Husain.<sup>2</sup>—I was passing, he said, along the Samarra Road, and entered the palace called Ahmadi<sup>3</sup> to examine the ruins. When I had reached the middle of the building I saw an inscription on a wall there as follows :

Well may the visitor take warning here ;  
Of whilom splendour now no signs appear.  
Its star is set, its half demolished lies ;  
Deceased its master, lost its memories.

He also recited to me the following by himself :

For love I guard thee with an eye  
Forbidden in sweet sleep to close ;  
And thou dost in its pupil lie,  
And in my heart of hearts repose.

(1) He was still chief of the tribe in 372, *Eclipse* vi. 54.

(2) The author does not state which of the many persons who had this *kunya* is meant.

(3) Probably built by the Caliph Musta'in.

Abu'l-Qasim of Tyre recited to me the following by Abu'l-Hasan al-Musawi al-'Alawi, which he had heard from the author :

O thou who in the core dost lie  
Both of my heart and of my eye.

135. The following was told me by Abu'l-Fadl Muhammad b. Ubaidallah.<sup>1</sup> I was told, he said, by a number of the leading clerks in Baghdad that al-Qasim b. 'Ubaidallah felt alarm at the intimacy of al-Husain b. 'Amr the Christian with the Caliph,<sup>2</sup> so he employed people to spy upon him. He even pretended to be in love with a singing girl who was beloved by al-Husain b. 'Amr, gratified her in various ways, and got her to divulge private affairs of al-Husain and his son, which through her intimacy with the former she had learned. Ultimately he superseded al-Husain in her affection so much that al-Husain was compelled to make a friend of al-Qasim on her account. The latter drew al-Husain on, made of him a sort of mess-mate, gratified him with various favours, and made mischief between him and his son, who also took to bringing al-Qasim information about his father. One day this son came and informed al-Qasim that al-Husain (his father) was bargaining with al-Muqtafi for the vizierate, had guaranteed to extract a vast sum (he gave the figure) from al-Qasim and his dependants, and indeed had settled with the Caliph that al-Husain's secretary Ibrahim b. Hamdan of Shiraz (according to Abu'l-Fadl the grandfather of Abu'l-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Husain b. Ibrahim known as *al-Mushrif* " (the Overseer )")<sup>3</sup> should be appointed vizier to manage all that al-Qasim b. Ubaidallah had been managing for al-Muqtafi, should be clad in the black robe, and have the title vizier, since al-Husain himself was unwilling to adopt Islam, and it was unlawful to appoint to the vizierate a member of a tolerated cult, but that all public business and offices should be under al-Husain's control, and the new vizier be ordered to carry out al-Husain's instructions ; having no admission to the Caliph except at parades and public audiences, where he should present visitors, and formally officiate in his black robe, with sword and belt, but do nothing more. Qaris<sup>4</sup> the nurse of al-Muqtafi, was, he added, the person who had arranged

(1) See § 14.

(2) This anecdote amplifies and explains the short notice in Tabari iii. 2230.

(3) See Index to the *Eclipse* for his career.

(4) Probably the Greek name Charis.

the affair with the Caliph, who had promised that all should be carried out on a particular day which was soon coming and which he specified, when the Caliph would have al-Qasim and his dependants arrested and delivered to al-Husain b. 'Amr.

Al-Qasim b. Ubaidallah hereupon consulted Abu'l-'Abbas b. al-Furat\* as to the steps which he had better take. Abu'l-'Abbas declared that he had in his possession something which would relieve al-Qasim of all difficulty.—What is it?—He asked.—A letter, replied Abu'l-'Abbas, in the writing of al-Husain b. 'Amr (with which the Caliph is acquainted) to your father written to him from one of the regions whither al-Muqtafi had travelled in the days of al-Mu'tadid, when al-Husain b. 'Amr was al-Muqtafi's secretary. In that letter al-Husain informs your father of al-Muqtafi's miserliness, the baseness of his character, his failings and his atrocities, his weakness and incompetence, in the strongest terms, and advises your father to convey this information to al-Mu'tadid, and endeavour to get him recalled to the capital, so that the realm might not be disgraced. Your best plan then is to make out an inventory of all your possessions, everything that you possess, including your house and your lands, and go and demand a private audience of the Caliph. When that has been granted, throw yourself on the ground before him, and with tears produce the inventory, and beg him to accept the whole as a free and lawful gift, and retain you in his service or else promise you safety for your person and your life, and not to surrender you to al-Husain b. 'Amr, who is wholly untrustworthy. If the Caliph asks you the reason for this, then tell him that al-Husain b. Amr has divulged the secret, and it has come to your knowledge. You will then produce the letter and say to him: How, Prince of Believers, can you trust with your person and your realm a man who has this opinion of you? When he reads the letter after what he has heard you say, he will relent, become reconciled to you, and turn against al-Husain b. 'Amr.—If he asks you how you got possession of the letter, tell him that it was in your father's archives, preserved as a weapon against al-Husain for you to use and to be handed over to you; and that Mu'tadid had been afraid of the man to the day of his death. You, however, had forgotten about it till now, when you have brought it to light. Undertake further to extract from

---

\* Brother of the famous vizier.



al-Husain b. 'Amr and Ibrahim of Shiraz with their dependants so many thousands (of dinars) as you will be able to realize, and the Caliph will acquiesce. When you have obtained his promise, then assure him that the matter has become public and the subject of conversation, and the source of various rumours; should he delay the surrender of these persons to you, the officials will be unable to proceed with their business, as every one will be wanting to secure something, which will injure the Caliph; further the business of the vizierate will be impeded and the office rendered contemptible if their surrender to you be delayed. The Caliph is sure to surrender them.

Al-Qasim immediately sailed to Muktafi, carrying out all Abu'l-'Abbas's directions, and all the latter's forecast was realized. When al-Qasim came away he had obtained the Caliph's permission to arrest al-Husain b. 'Amr and his dependants. He arrested them, confiscated their goods, and when he was conscious that these were exhausted, he sent al-Husain b. 'Amr and Ibrahim of Shiraz into exile at Ahwaz, where he appointed jailors for them, who took them in charge when they had reached the place. It is said that they were placed in a chamber which was then closed and no water or food allowed to be introduced. When al-Qasim was assured that they were dead, the door was opened, and they were removed to another chamber and it was given out that they had died a natural death.<sup>1</sup>

The narrator proceeded: When al-Qasim had issued victorious and the plan had proved a success, he kissed the head and eyes of Abu'l-'Abbas b. al-Furat, and thanked him with expressions like, You are my father and my right arm, etc. This aroused the jealousy of Ibn Firas<sup>2</sup> who suggested to the vizier to ask Abu'l-'Abbas whence he had procured the letter. He did so, and Abu'l-'Abbas replied as follows: Some time ago, he said, when I was passing down a street I noticed at a confectioner's shop a rail on which some loose leaves were hanging intended for

(1) Tabari iii. 2230 states that in Shawwal 290 al-Qasim arrested al-Husain b. 'Amr, whose secretary (Ibrahim of Shiraz) fled, in consequence of which a reward was offered for his capture. After a few days al-Husain was allowed to go home on condition that he quitted Baghdad; and a week after he went to Wasit in exile. Some months later the secretary was discovered. Mez in the work translated by Mr. Khuda Bukhsh in *Islamic Culture* has shown that these tales of atrocities were often popular gossip.

(2) He is probably the Abu'l-Husain b. al-Firas mentioned by Hilal among the persons who came to condole with al-Qasim on the death of Abu'l-'Abbas.

the wrapping of sweetmeats sold; I have never seen a scrap of writing but have wanted to read it, and have often profited immensely thereby. Glancing at the leaves my eye fell on the address of this letter, and as I recognized the script of al-Husain b. 'Amr, I was anxious to read the letter. So I told my slave to go and buy a certain sweetmeat seeing that it is wrapped in this leaf, pointing to the letter. He did so, brought it to me, and when I read it I found its contents to be atrocious. I said to myself: This is the worst man in existence, if he can be a man's secretary and write about him in this style behind his back. Possibly some day mischief may threaten me from this man, and I may avert it by means of this letter; or I may publish it and therewith expose his bad qualities. So I wiped off the marks of the sweetmeat, and preserved the letter which has been in my possession for so many years. When the vizier told me this story just now, I perceived that the time had come to produce the letter, which I have done.

When (Abu'l-'Abbas) b. al-Furat had left the room, Ibn Firas, who had always been calumniating the former to al-Qasim, who however had paid no attention to his statements, said: now the extent of Ibn al-Furat's malignity has been made clear to you. He is a greater danger to you than was al-Husain b. 'Amr. This man is a surreptitious foe, who insinuates himself within your garments, whereas al-Husain was an open enemy, against whom you could guard yourself. What assurance have you that during the period in which you have been giving him your confidence he may not have been treasuring up against you more than this, or have got hold of some script of yours which you have forgotten, containing libellous expressions, as he did in the case of al-Husain b. 'Amr? How can you be sure that he has not writings of your own or of your father in this style? For people often feel anger against their employers and express themselves freely at home among their intimates. Ibn al-Furat is only watching for some sign of alienation on your part, or some difference with him about some matter which he does not want whereas you do, to reveal to the Caliph about you or your father something even more serious than this, with your ruin for the result. If you spare him, still you are like a ward under his control, and he is of opinion that it was his counsel which restored you to the vizierate, will regard the world as his fief, of which he will monopolize the profits, leaving you to bear the blame;

whereas if you alarm him, he will put you to death by some such action as you have heard. You had better take my advice and deal speedily with him; contrive to poison him and so rid yourself of him. This speech affected al-Qasim, and Ibn Firas kept on urging his advice till ultimately al-Qasim poisoned an apple, and gave it to Ibn al-Furat to smell, which caused his death. This letter was the unluckiest ever heard of.<sup>1</sup>

136. I was told the following by Abu Muhammad.<sup>2</sup> I heard, he said, one of the chief clerks in Baghdad recount after someone who had told to him, how the latter had heard Abu'l-Hasan b. al-Furat say to Abu Ja'far b. Bistam, of whom he had a low opinion. Come now, Abu Ja'far, you have a story of a loaf; what is it?—He said: I have no story about a loaf.—Ibn al-Furat however insisted, and finally told him that it would be better for him if he did narrate it. So he said: Well, my mother was a pious old dame, and from the time of my birth accustomed me to have a loaf weighing a *ratl* placed at night under the pillow on which I slept, and next morning she would give it away in charity on my behalf. I have been doing the same until now.—Ibn al-Furat said: I never heard of anything stranger than this. You are to know that I had the lowest opinion of you owing to matters which caused that (of which he enumerated some), and have for some days been thinking of arresting you and demanding money of you. Three nights ago I had a dream in which I seemed to have summoned you in order to arrest you, when you fought and resisted, I ordered people to fight you, but you came out against those who would fight you with a loaf for a shield in your hand, with which you diverted the arrows, so that none of them reached you. I now call God to witness that I abandon for God's sake the sentiments which I harboured about you, and that my opinion of you from this time is most favourable, so cheer up.—Abu Ja'far bent down to kiss his hands and feet.

137. I was told the following by Abu Tahir al-Muhasin b. Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Jauhari of Shiraz known

(1) It is noteworthy that Hilal makes no mention of this affair, though he records how Ibn Firas was one of the visitors who came to condole with al-Qasim for Ibn al-Furat's death. Perhaps then this story, which reveals the blackest ingratitude as well as treachery, is merely gossip.

(2) Hilal gives his full name as Abu Muhammad Yahya b. Muhammad b. Fahd. He is frequently cited in Part I as Yahya b. Muhammad b. Sulaiman b. Fahd of the tribe Azd and of Mausil. See above § 81.

as Ibn al-Muqtafi, one of the Witnesses in the City of Peace (Baghdad). He said: I was told by Abu'l-Fadl al-'Abbas b. Fisanjas<sup>1</sup> that during part of the time in which he had been in government employ in Fars he had gained fifty million dirhems, and that during his residence in Shiraz he had on separate occasions been fined by 'Ali b. Buwaihi<sup>2</sup> six hundred thousand dinars, in addition to the land-tax which he extorted from my estate, which he afterwards seized on the double pretext.—Now what I would observe is this. This story by itself would be sufficient to indicate the difference between the times. Abu'l-Fadl held no higher office than the secretaryship for Fars and deputyship for the governors there either for the whole province or part of it occasionally, and yet he acquired all this wealth. His son Abu'l-Faraj<sup>3</sup> Muhammad was in control of all the bureaux of Iraq for twenty-eight years, then of the vizierate for thirteen months,<sup>4</sup> and attained honours which his father never reached. When at the time of his fall he was overwhelmed with exactions and which were ruthlessly inflicted, his fine amounted to one million two hundred thousand dirhems, the payment of which ruined him.<sup>5</sup>

138. The following was told me by Abu Muhammad Yahya b. Muhammad b. Fahd. I was informed, he said, by a certain shaikh that al-Qasim b. 'Ubaidallah was in fear of Mu'tadid and carried on his drinking and other amusements in secret, lest the Caliph should regard him as a youth given up to frivolity and negligent of his duties, and so conceive a bad opinion of him. Still, being young and immature, he was fond of amusement, and when he could pursue it with extreme secrecy, he would steal a night or a day of his life, and drink. One night he wanted to have a drinking bout with roses and he contrived to amass a great quantity of the flowers, clandestinely, and he got together a great number of singing-girls, among them one to whom he was specially attached, and sat with them and no other company, drinking. With the roses

(1) Ob. 348 A.H. For his career see Index to the *Eclipse*.

(2) He was 'Ali b. Buwaihi ('Imad al-daulah's) tax-farmer. If the dinar be taken at its normal value, 15 dirhems, the fines will amount to nine million dirhems, which would be less than a fifth of the man's fortune.

(3) For his career see Index to the *Eclipse*.

(4) He was appointed in 359. Miskawaihi tells the story of the intrigues, which resulted in his appointment and subsequent dismissal, at great length.

(5) Miskawaihi speaks of "a huge sum,"

he mingled light dirhems, and had a shower of these. People call a feast of this sort *shadguli*.<sup>1</sup> He clothed himself in a woman's garment of dyed brocade, and owing to his extreme attachment to the singing-girl made the same garment cover both. The evening passed agreeably, and at midnight he stopped the drinking for fear of crapula, went to sleep, sailed to Mu'tadid next morning and worked at his duties till the time for his departure arrived. When he wished to depart he went to Mu'tadid's apartment to show himself to the Caliph and take his leave. Mu'tadid bade him approach till he was so near that no one else could hear what he said, and said to him : Qasim, why did not you invite us yesterday so that we might have played *shadguli* with you ? I fancy you were ashamed of the fancy dress worn by you and your beloved.—Al-Qasim almost died of chagrin. Mu'tadid said to him : What is the matter with you, why are you so alarmed ? What is there in this ? Had we known that it would affect you so we should not have told you anything, or hurt your feelings. You may go, and God guard you !

Al-Qasim returned home sorrowful, summoned his advisers, and told them the story. Mu'tadid's purpose, he said, in this was to show me that even such a detail of my affairs does not escape him ; and if he really knows such a detail as this, how can he fail to know about my secret profits and such of my affairs as admit less of concealment ? What will my life be like, when a man like that knows all about it ? What then do you advise me to do ?

They tried their best to comfort him, but he only got more chagrined, till at last he said to them : If I do not find out who conveyed this information, my gall will burst, and I shall put an end to myself. They said they would enquire and find out. One of them said at once that he would deal with the business for the prince.<sup>2</sup>—This particular friend started prowling round the Caliph's Palace, to discover someone who looked like a secret service man, and whom he might suspect, but had no success that day, and the next day prowled about the ministries, the offices of the postmasters, and those of the secret service the whole day, but without success ; on the third day he prowled about the vizier's Palace and its apartments, also without success. On the fourth day he stayed on his mount at the Public Gate in the vizier's Palace, at a loss and not knowing what to do, while waiting for the vizier to come

(1) A Persian compound meaning " of fresh roses. "

(2) Similarly we find viziers called by their flatterers " king. "

out on horseback, when he might join the vizier's company and study the faces of the party, since there was nothing left of which he could think. Suddenly he noticed a young man creeping along on his knees like a cripple, in the style of a mendicant cripple. The man had come long before sunrise and crept along, entering the lodges of the porters, who did not prevent him. The observer said: When the man had got to the threshold he stopped with the porters and talked to them for a time, whilst I listened. He asked them about their affairs, and invoked blessings on them, and when they were in a good humour he drew them into a different subject, presently saying to them: Who came to the offices this morning? Who was admitted and who was refused admittance?—They gave him the names.—When I heard this, I perceived that he was the secret service man, and pursued him with my gaze till he had got past the porters, whither I followed him, and had reached the curtain-keepers. His procedure with them was similar to his procedure with the others. They told him things which I had not known although I was a confidential servant of the vizier, about visitors who had been admitted to him or had been refused admission. The man passed on to the vestibule of the public room, where I dismounted, and followed him, he being unaware of this, and presently came to the place of the chamberlains. They took no notice of him, and he neither talked to them nor they to him. Presently he invoked blessings on them and begged alms which they gave him. He then passed on to the inner courts, where I could see him, and he went on creeping and prowling about the different store-chambers of furniture, wine, and clothing, and the chambers of the slaves and eunuchs, asking for information and talking on all subjects, within my hearing, so that I learned things I had not known about the management of the vizier's household. Then he went to the door of the women's apartment, and invoked a blessing on the eunuch who was in charge of the door, begging of him; the eunuch gave him something, and he stayed there talking amusingly. When any slave-girl or eunuch came in or went out, the man would ask them about their affairs, they would disregard him, and give him something, and he would proceed to extract from them the affairs of the Palace, spit, and say: Tell my lady X to give me what she promised, and tell my lady Y to bestow charity on me, and ask my lady Z the Stewardess how she is, and greet her from me.—I kept watching him admiringly till he had exhausted everything that could be known about the affairs of al-Qasim's

slave-girls, where he spent his night and with which of them last night, how the girls amused each other, how they were dressed, and all sorts of curious information of this style. Then he crept on and proceeded to the vizier's private apartment, where the vizier was by himself and from which he mounted his horse; he was beamed upon by the bedmakers of the chamber, the attendants, eunuchs and junior retainers, who joked with him, while he invoked blessings on them, and got alms from some of them. He asked about the doings of the vizier in his private room and what he drank. Some of them told him that the vizier had been in great distress for two days, for which they did not know the reason, and had neither eaten nor drunk, neither slept nor retired. While asking all these questions the man made a show of buffoonery, and acted the part of one who was deranged or half-witted, and his words were interpreted by the servants on that supposition; the weak-minded among them bandied jests and coarse witticisms with him, and he put up with this till he had finished with the staff of the private chamber. He then came out and crept along in his former style, not swerving from his course till he reached the room of the clerks. There he stopped a long time, carrying on as before, then came out through the door having filled a basket, which he had with him, with bread, sweets and victuals, and his purse with dirhems. When he had reached the gate of the palace, I asked the porters if they knew the man. They said: He is a cripple who comes and begs, and is a good-natured man, so that every one in the palace finds him agreeable and is kind to him.—I said: I pity him, and should like to take him something. Does any one of you know his home?—They said No one.—So I mounted my horse, followed him, and caught him up; I then stopped and pretended to be talking to my slave, and began to proceed cautiously behind him till he came to the Bridge. He crossed this crawling with me behind him, and then entered the Khuld,\* which I entered with him. He went inside a hostelry and I bade my slave follow him and find out his room therein. He did so, came back to me, and described it to me. I stayed bewildered, not knowing what I should do, or whom I should ask about him, fearing

---

\* The "Palace of Eternity" was so called from its gardens being supposed to rival those of Paradise, and was built by the Caliph Mansur who took up his residence there in the year 158 A.H. The Palace itself stood on the Tigris bank opposite the Khurasan Gate and a short distance below the Main Bridge of Boats.—So Le Strange, *Baghdad*, p.102 who describes it at length. Here the name seems to refer to a district.

I might scare him, and he might run away. I stayed so long that I thought of going away, when he came out sound in body and clean with clothes of Merv, a white beard, a hood and a turban, which he had arranged between his eyebrows; had I not seen him so recently, I should not have recognized him. He was now walking with no difficulty, and I observed that his white beard was put on over his real beard, which he concealed with his turban. I only noticed this because I scrutinized him carefully, and my attention was directed to it because I had seen him so recently (with a beard of another colour). He walked on, and I entered a mosque, altered my turban, and bade my slave take my horse and wait for me with it at the bridge. I removed my shoes and put on my slave's sandals; I then walked after the man very fast, watching him, till he came to Ibn Tahir's Palace;<sup>1</sup> a eunuch came out to him, and no word passed between them; only the man produced a small paper, and handed it to the eunuch, who went in again, whereas the man turned back.

I did not follow him any further but proceeded to Ya'qub's Steps,<sup>2</sup> embarked in a *sumairiyjah*, went up to the vizier's palace, and presented myself to the vizier. He invited me to a meal with him, which I took, and when the others had departed I retained my seat.—He bade me speak. I said to him: Yesterday you did so and so, and so and so took place in your women's apartments, one girl said this, and another girl said that to you, and your young eunuch X did so and so (I had heard in the course of my adventure the reciprocal relations of the servants, which I do not think the secret service man learned, only which the conversations involved). All this I repeated to him.—He said: My friend, what are you saying? Whence do you know all these tales?—I said from the source whence the tale of the *shadguli* was derived.—Tell me, he said.—And the reward? I asked.—Name your own terms, he replied.—So I told him the story of the cripple exactly as it had happened. He drew me to himself, kissed me between the eyes, and ordered a vast sum of money to be given me. He then said: I want you to get hold of the man in such a way that nothing will be known about him. I undertook to do this, and asked him to command one of his private attendants to take my orders.—He had one of them brought to me and instructed him to that effect. Next morning I went at an early hour to the palace, and

(1) See Le Strange's *Baghdad*, p. 118.

(2) Evidently the name of a place where boats could be hired.



sat down to wait for the man, who presently appeared in yesterday's garb and as a cripple; he went in, and I did not interfere with him till he entered the private chamber. I followed him, and said to the attendant: Seize this man. He did so; and we locked him into a recess in the apartment. The man was disturbed and began to sob; the vizier came down, and I whispered to him what had happened; he set aside his business, entered the apartment, and summoned the man, who came crawling.—I hit him on the neck and said to him: Stand up, you rogue, and walk straight, as I saw you walking yesterday.—He said: I am a cripple.—I had scourges brought, and when he saw that we meant business, he stood up and walked. Al-Qasim said to him: Tell me the truth about yourself otherwise I will kill you at once.—He said I have been Mu'tadid's spy upon you for so many months. I have been doing various things—(he recounted much the same as I had already reported to the vizier and his method, and how he collected information, wrote it down every day at noon, and brought a small sheet containing it to the eunuch in charge of the Palace of Ibn Tahir, who conveyed it to Mu'tadid, this eunuch acting as intermediary between them. Further that at the beginning of every month the eunuch handed to him thirty gold dinars).

Al-Qasim bade the spy tell him what information he had conveyed during that period about himself. The man mentioned a number of things including the *shadguli*. Al-Qasim confined him in that apartment, and when night came he was put to death and buried, and Mu'tadid got no further news of him. When a month or more had passed, al-Qasim said to me: I am rid of that hound, and I cannot find that Mu'tadid knows anything of my private affairs, nor do I see any indication that he has learned anything about them.<sup>1</sup>

139. The following was told me by Abu'l-Fath Ahmad b. Ali b. Harun al-Munajjim.<sup>2</sup> I was informed, he said by my father that Abu Bakr b. Ra'iq<sup>3</sup> was an enthusiastic

(1) This anecdote seems to suit the character of al-Qasim b. 'Ubaidallah as it appears in the other narratives about him. A wiser man could have outwitted the Caliph without resorting to bloodshed.

(2) There is a short account of him in the *Irshad* i. 231. Yaqut apparently knows of him only from the quotations in the *Table-talk*. He came of a distinguished family.

(3) For his career see Index to the *Eclipse*. He is historically of importance as the first "Prince of Princes" who took over the functions of the Caliph in Baghdad, relegating the latter to the position of figure-head. The "eclipse" of the Caliphate commenced with him, though his tenure of office was short.

admirer of the music of Abu'l-Qasim b. Tarkhan, as the latter well deserved. He was indeed one of the most amiable of mankind, and most efficient in his art. He could touch the *tunbur*<sup>1</sup> in a way that was sweeter than a stroke; so entrancing was the sound that people's hearts when they heard it nearly leapt out of their ribs. When he started playing Ibn Ra'iq would start drinking cups of wine till the music came to an end. One day he said to me:<sup>2</sup> Abu'l-Hasan, to what in your opinion can this touch, than which there is nothing sweeter on earth, be compared?—I replied: Prince, it resembles the messenger of a beloved one asking permission for a visit.—This reply pleased him, and presently the story was told to 'Ubaidallah b. Muhammad of Tyre, who in my presence composed the following verses on this theme, and recited them to me:

Her lover's asleep: see her rise  
And banish that sleep from his eyes.  
And touched ere she sang from desire  
The string numbered two of her lyre.  
And when its sweet note made him start,  
It seemed to his ears and his heart,  
Like messenger saying: There waits  
The one you adore at your gates.

140. The following also was told me by Abu'l-Fath. I was, he said, in the company of my father when he had with him a singer, who, whenever he came to an *M* in his melody, pronounced it clearly. My father said to him: When in your melodies you come to an *M* or *N*, compress it; I guarantee that it will sound sweeter and I will bear any loss which it may occasion you. The man repeated the *M* with extreme compression, and the sweetness of the sound was increased many times.

141. I heard the vizier Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi talking at a gathering when I was present. I had, he said, left Ahwaz with Abu Ja'far al-Saimari on our way to Sus, of which he was governor for Mu'izz al-daulah.<sup>3</sup> The mother of Abu'l-Ghana'im<sup>4</sup> was in Sus at the time; it was at the commencement of my notoriety with her, and I greatly yearned after her (meaning his slave-girl Tajni).<sup>5</sup> When we got to the sandy part of the road a

(1) Farmer, *History of Arabian Music.*, renders this word by Pandore. It was a stringed instrument.

(2) The narrator's father is speaking.

(3) This was in 326; see *Eclipse* iv. 432.

(4) Muhallabi's son al-Fadl.

(5) See Index to the *Eclipse* for references to her.

violent gale arose which blew the sand upon us, and I re-collected two couplets of Farazdaq :<sup>2</sup>

Riders who seemed as though the wind were fain  
To strip their head-gear, pulling might and main ;  
It I defied and made my friend to face  
Until we reached our loved ones' dwelling place.

Of which I made

And Oh, the gale, which raised such dust and heat  
And stripped the riders' garments to their feet ;  
It I defied and made my friend to face  
Until we reached our loved ones' dwelling place.

He also recited to me the following by himself :

Thinks the eye it from above  
On my heart threw load of love ?  
Foolishly it fancieth ;  
What it threw thereon was death.

142. I was told the following by Abu 'Ali al-Hasan b. Sahl b. 'Abdallah of Idhaj,<sup>2</sup> who was deputy qadi for my father in Idhaj and for Ramhurmuz,<sup>3</sup> and continued to do legal business, and was a messmate of Abu Muhammad al-Muhallabi during his vizierate. He enjoyed the favour of Muhallabi, became influential with him, and indulged in frivolity and debauchery such as was improper for a qadi. He was addressed as qadi, and Muhallabi in his letters used to address him as "My lord the qadi." He was well grounded in literature. He said : When I was young, I went to Basrah to take down information, and become a scholar. Abu Abdallah al-Mufajja<sup>4</sup> was my constant companion, and I restricted myself to him as teacher. One day he wrote to me, when the weather was cold :

O gallant lad, that title worth,  
When gallant lads are rare on earth ;  
He's blest who owns in winter's cold.  
Cup, robe and shawl and purse of gold.<sup>5</sup>

I sent him all that he solicited.

(1) Umayyad poet of great celebrity.

(2) "The chief town of Great Lur was Idhaj, otherwise called Mal Amir. Muqaddasi describes it in the 4th-10th century as one of the finest towns of Khuzistan." *Le Strange Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 245.

(3) "Three days' march east of Ahwaz is the city of Ramhurmuz. In the 4th-10th century it was famed for the silkworms reared there, and raw silk was largely exported." *Ibid.* p. 243.

(4) Ob. 320 A.H.

(5) All these words in the original begin with K. A contemporary, Ibn Sukkasah, enumerated six, quoted in Hariri's xxvth Maqamah.

143. He also told me the following. Abu Khalifah,<sup>1</sup> he said, was a friend of my father and my uncle in the days when they came on deputation to the districts of Ahwaz during the Zanj civil war.<sup>2</sup> When I came to Basrah, I came there with my father, and Abu Khalifah lodged us in his house, did us honour, and gave me the use of his books. I used to read to him and hear from him as much as I chose, and was allowed to copy his texts. When night came on we would sit and talk. At times when I wanted to read to him he would assent, and when I tired him with reading too much he would ask me to let him rest, and I would stop reading. When he was rested he would take out of his pocket a note-book made of old yellow leaves, and say: Read to me out of this, which is my writing, whereas what you have been reading is from the script of someone else. So I would read to him from that, and it contained the Diwan of 'Imran b. Hittan.<sup>3</sup> Certain passages in it caused him to shed tears. One night I recited to him the ode which contains the lines

Stroke of a noble man, whose aim thereby  
Was Him to please who sitteth throned on high!  
In the Almighty's balance to my mind  
He weighs the heaviest of all mankind.<sup>4</sup>

When I came to these verses he was so deeply affected over them that he nearly fainted. I thought this astonishing and wondered. Next day I met al-Mufajja' and told him the story. I was incautious owing to our common interest in literature, but I asked him to keep the matter secret lest it should injure Abu Khalifah's reputation. Al-Mufajja' proceeded to compose the lines

Abu Khalifah's heart with hate is filled  
Of Hashim's<sup>5</sup> house, both open and concealed.  
I knew it, horrified; so he regards  
This 'Imran, Hittan's son, as choice of bards!

He recited these verses to me, and I repeated them to someone else. A certain student took them down at his dictation, on a small piece of paper which he put into his pen-case. One day we were present at a public lecture at

(1) See § 24. The opening sentence is imperfect in the MS and the name has been supplied by conjecture.

(2) The revolt of the workers in the salt marshes of Basrah, which lasted from 255 to 270 A.H. and threatened the Caliphate with ruin.

(3) Poet of the khariji sect, ob. 89 A.H. There is a lengthy account of him in the *Aghani* xvi. 152 foll.

(4) The poet is eulogizing Ibn Muljam, the murderer of 'Ali the fourth Caliph, and the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law.

(5) An ancestor of the Prophet.

Abu Khalifah's residence, when the man happened to take up his pen-case to see what it contained, and the paper fell out. When the man had departed, Abu Khalifah found it, and read it. He was exceedingly angry and said: This cursed and confounded Idhaji is after my blood. Bring Abu'l-Abbas, the Witness (meaning my father) here. —My father came, and Abu Khalifah told him the story. I found myself in serious trouble, and nearly had a grave quarrel with my father. Abu Khalifah forbade me to read with him any more. I was abashed, presented him with valuable wearing apparel, gave him enough money to pay an army, and apologized. He was placated, accepted my apology, continued my instruction and permitted me to read to him. I read the *Book of Classes*<sup>1</sup> and certain others that he had. But he said: I will not declare myself satisfied with you till you confess that you lied.<sup>2</sup>—I did so, and presented al-Mufajja' with a Dabiqi robe to make him refrain from reciting the verses, and disown them. He too apologized to Abu Khalifah.

Abu 'Ali said to me shortly after this: Most of the transmitters of Arab learning, so far as I have heard about them, have been either Khawarij or Shu'ubis,<sup>3</sup> like Abu Hatim of Sijistan<sup>4</sup> and Abu 'Ubaidah Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna,<sup>5</sup> etc., etc. (he enumerated a number).

(1) Classes of the pre-Islamic poets.

(2) *i.e.*, that the whole story was false.

(3) Persons who believed that all other races were superior to the Arab.

(4) Ob. 255 A.H. Ibn Khallikan's biography of him contains no allusion to such opinions.

(5) Ob. about 209 A.H. according to Ibn Kallikhan he held both the opinions mentioned.

(End of Part II.)

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.